

ABSTRACT

CATES, MADISON WARD. "White Men Without Side-Arms:" Moderation, Manhood, and the Politics of Civil Rights in North Carolina, 1960-1965. (Under the direction of Dr. Katherine Mellen Charron).

Much of the existing historiography on the Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina either focuses on grassroots activists at the community level or on debates about whether the state's white citizens exhibited "progressive" views on race or not. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the relationships and political struggles between African American activists, white moderates, and arch-segregationists at the state level from 1960 to 1965. Throughout, broader ideas about gender, race, religion, and democracy are analyzed in order to move beyond oversimplified narratives that accentuate the bold, progressive outlooks of white moderates, reduce their segregationist opponents to caricatures, and diminish the role that African Americans played in challenging white political dominance.

In particular, this paper explores how African-Americans leveraged the state's "progressive mystique" to obtain greater concessions from white moderate politicians, especially Governor Terry Sanford. Yet, white moderates also confronted strident objections to any change from white supremacists. In order to mollify the demands of both groups, Sanford's leadership exemplified a temperate *realpolitik* that opposed direct action campaigns and promoted racial harmony, quality public education, and robust economic development. It also reflected the ways in which events forced him to do in gendered terms.

When black activists filled the streets and public facilities of North Carolina employing non-violent direct action as consistent with their dignity as men and citizens, Sanford and other white moderates responded by recasting southern manhood on ideas of law and order and Christian brotherhood. This vision stood in stark contrast to arch-

segregationists' more traditional conception of masculinity that privileged the defense of white women and children and acted as a clarion call for massive resistance. By looking at these interactions through the lenses of race, gender, and politics, this work hopes to raise important questions about who determines the possibilities of social change, how masculinity has been constructed in the history of the American South, and how contingency can scrutinize narratives about North Carolina's progressive reputation.

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“White Men Without Side-Arms:” Moderation, Manhood, and the Politics of Civil Rights in
North Carolina, 1960-1965

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

History

Raleigh, North Carolina

2015

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to all my family, immediate, extended, and otherwise, for all their love and support.

BIOGRAPHY

Madison Cates is a native of Hillsborough, North Carolina. Growing up in a town with numerous historical markers and sites most likely contributed to his early interests in studying the history of the United States. Madison graduated from Gardner-Webb University in May 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts in History. At this point, he plans to graduate with his Master of Arts this May and pursue his Ph.D. in History beginning next fall.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am humbled by all the careful attention that so many people have given to aid my personal and academic development. First, I cannot express enough appreciation for the time and effort that my advisor Dr. Katherine Mellen Charron gave to helping me develop this project, editing and commenting on numerous drafts, and for making me stick to “the calendar,” which I desperately needed. I owe so much of my confidence and growth as a historian and a teacher to Dr. Charron. I am also very grateful for the great interest and attention the late Dr. Walter Jackson devoted to critiquing the last two chapters of this thesis over the course of the past two semesters. His passion for the craft of history and, more importantly, students and colleagues will be missed, but never forgotten. Dr. Matthew Booker provided me with an outstanding model of how scholars can produce incisive research while also inspiring students to learn by asking big, often unanswerable questions. I am further indebted to Dr. Booker for his thoughtful review of a portion of this work for a conference paper and willingness to serve on my committee. Although I had little training in Latin American History, Dr. Nicholas Robins’s course on “Latin American Revolutions in the Twentieth Century” piqued my interest and helped improve my research and writing skills. Dr. Susanna Lee and Dr. Megan Cherry read and offered invaluable feedback, whether for class, writing groups, or conferences, on drafts and abstracts of this work. Also, Dr. Lee graciously reviewed the second chapter as my writing sample, along with numerous drafts of personal statements as part of workshops on applying to Ph.D. programs.

The origins of this thesis came from a term paper I wrote for Dr. Timothy Vanderburg's "History of the New South" class at Gardner-Webb University. Therefore, I can be nothing short of thankful for the friends, mentors, and professors who most shaped my undergraduate studies, including: Dr. Vanderburg, Dr. David K. Yelton, and Dr. Joseph S. Moore. Among so many other things they taught me, this cohort of professors and colleagues taught me about so much more than historical knowledge and skills.

And most of all, I have to thank my wife Carly, my parents David and Nancy, my sister Claire, and all my extended family, who nurtured and encouraged my love for studying the past, but most of all, who keep me optimistic, humble, and, above all else, who remind me of what is most important. They have attended all my presentations over the past six years, and, I am sure, would be at my thesis defense if possible. Even more significantly, all of you encouraged my efforts, made me laugh when I needed it most, joyfully put up with my large book collections, and so much more than I have space to write about here.

In athletics, coaches often say that winning a championship requires a team to possess both skill and luck. Although there is no comparison between athletics and writing this thesis, I am very fortunate to have such dedicated family, friends, professors, and mentors. I credit the skill to all those above, any errors or faults that remain are my own.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: Fighting for a New Day: Terry Sanford and Jim Crow North Carolina, 1896-1961.....	21
CHAPTER 2: The Tobacco Curtain: North Carolina and the Freedom Highways Campaign, 1961-1962	65
CHAPTER 3: “The Only Weapon We Have Found:” Democracy, Moderation, and the Protest Movements of 1963-1965	109
CONCLUSION.....	162
REFERENCES	173

INTRODUCTION:

“the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the white Citizen’s Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can’t agree with your methods of direct action;’ who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom.”¹ –Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” April 16, 1963

Unlike his idol, Martin Luther King Jr., no published record exists of what Jesse Jackson said or wrote in June 1963 while confined in a makeshift jail at Greensboro’s old polio hospital. Jackson’s “Letter from Greensboro Jail,” as it became known, developed out of an unscripted speech directed to a gathering of his fellow protestors and the police officers guarding the jail. A. Knighton Stanley, a local Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) activist, remembered the speech as both “equally poetic as Martin Luther King’s letter” and remarkable for its spontaneity and “national implications.”² William Thomas Jr., another local CORE leader, also described Jackson’s letter as a “dramatic” statement “indicting everybody,” which helped motivate local civil rights activists.³ King’s “Letter,” considered one of the most important texts in American history, had a profound effect on Jackson, then a student and football player at historically-black North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T). Indeed, Jackson stood as one student leader in a series of large

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter From Birmingham Jail,” in *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson (New York: Warner Books, 1998), 195.

² A. Knighton Stanley, Interview by Eugene Pfaff, January 26, 1982, GreensboroVOICES Collection, Greensboro: Greensboro Public Library, [Collection hereafter cited as “GreensboroVOICES Collection”].

³ William Thomas Jr., Interview by William H. Chafe, 1975, and Interview by Eugene Pfaff, July 5, 1979, GreensboroVOICES Collection.

protest movements in North Carolina who lived King's critique, before and after he penned his famous epistle, by challenging white moderates' gradualism and paternalism throughout the early 1960s.⁴

The elevation of Jackson's speech with the title "Letter from Greensboro Jail," demonstrates that civil rights activists in North Carolina worked to show outside observers how the movement faced challenges in the upper South as much as it did in Birmingham and the Deep South. Of course, this is not to suggest that the experiences of black activists in Alabama and North Carolina proved identical. To take one example, city police in Greensboro refused to use fire hoses on protesters, though their response during that same spring of 1963 filled the city's jails along with the prison farm, polio hospital, and National Guard Armory.⁵ However, the simultaneous direct action protests highlight how African American leaders in North Carolina understood the connections between the movement at the local, state, and national levels. How could Birmingham stir the conscience of the nation and the world, when other reports of police brutality emerged in North Carolina cities such as Statesville, Goldsboro, and even in Greensboro on another occasion, as activists struggled to dislodge the gradualist tendencies of local and state officials? This question also occupied the mind of segregationist firebrand and Alabama governor George C. Wallace. During an appearance on *Meet the Press* in early June 1963, Wallace pointedly questioned why the

⁴ On the history of King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and its challenge to a group of moderate white clergy in Birmingham, see Jonathan Rieder, *Gospel of Freedom: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail and the Struggle that Changed a Nation* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013); S. Jonathan Bass, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Martin Luther King, Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders, and the "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001).

⁵ William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 126- 130.

federal government refused to intervene in North Carolina despite civil rights activity similar to that in Birmingham during the previous months.⁶

This outside perception of a “moderate,” racially tolerant North Carolina reflected how it served as an effective foil to the Deep South. Historians point to North Carolina as a uniquely progressive state and Terry Sanford, its governor during the early 1960s, as a courageous, bold white Southern politician. Neither the natural disposition of the state’s white citizens nor the central theme of its political history, North Carolina’s “progressive mystique” or reputation required careful construction and an undaunted defense in the minds of many in the white business and political elite.⁷ The comparison only works when applied to the broader history of the American South.

Political scientist V.O. Key Jr. articulated the foundational argument for the state’s progressive history in his 1949 work, *Southern Politics in State & Nation*. Key defined North Carolina as a “Progressive plutocracy” that served as a “bridge” between the Deep South and “national norms.” Moreover, Key asserted, “the state has a reputation for fair dealings with its Negro citizens... Nowhere has co-operation between white and Negro leadership been more effective.”⁸ Even though Key’s claim has been discredited, many scholars regard Sanford as a uniquely progressive public figure whose leadership differentiated him and

⁶ “The Clash of Rights,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 4, 1963.

⁷ This point emerges from Barbara Anne Fields’ critique of historians’ search for a central theme of Southern History. As Fields claims, “race is neither the reflex of primordial attitudes nor a tragically recurring central theme.” Moreover, she concludes that the history of race indicates that “there are no tragic flaws or central themes in which to take shelter...There are only acts and decisions of men and women in a society now past, and a responsibility, because the outcome remains provisional, we are obliged to share with them.” See Barbara Anne Fields, “Ideology and Race in American History,” in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 168-169.

⁸ V.O. Key Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 205.

North Carolina from the rest of the South. In turn, their subsequent works continue to read its Civil Rights Movement in relation to their elusive search for a central theme or framework to explain the state's complex political heritage.⁹

Too often, historical accounts of Sanford's leadership blur the lines between biography and hagiography. Placing too much emphasis on Sanford's perspective of a tumultuous and contested period, such studies downplay the history of a protracted struggle for civil rights in North Carolina. Moreover, over-celebratory biographies present the movement as a series of crises that, under Sanford's leadership, brought cooperation, not conflict. In doing so, traditional interpretations of Terry Sanford and North Carolina's response to the Civil Rights Movement obscure the importance of both local black activists and white arch-segregationists, neither of whom approved of Sanford's moderate leadership.

Studies by William H. Chafe, Christina Greene, and Timothy B. Tyson, by contrast, reveal that North Carolina's communities emerged as contested battlegrounds for those seeking to overturn or defend the traditional social relations of the South.¹⁰ In Tyson's study

⁹ Prominent biographical works of Sanford along with more elite-focused monographs on the political history of the South supported the interpretation of Sanford as an exceptionally courageous leader during his term as governor. For example, Jack Bass and Walter DeVries assert that the only era that set North Carolina apart from the rest of the South occurred in the state's "last progressive era came in the administrations of Luther Hodges, Sr. and [Terry] Sanford" between 1955 and 1965. See Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequence Since 1945*, (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 228; Howard E. Covington Jr. and Marion A. Ellis, *Terry Sanford: Politics, Progress, and Outrageous Ambitions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); John Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will: How Terry Sanford Beat a Champion of Segregation and Reshaped the South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000).

¹⁰ See William H Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*; Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); David C. Carter, "The Williamston Freedom Movement: Civil Rights at the Grass Roots in Eastern North Carolina, 1957-1964," *North Carolina Historical Review* 76 (January 1999): 1-42.

of Robert F. Williams' leadership in the black freedom struggle in Monroe, North Carolina, offers insight into how African Americans paired non-violent protest with armed self-defense to defend their families and communities from white violence. Greene's monograph also emphasizes the importance of understanding how both formal organizations and "informal networks" of women activists in Durham, developed in the years around World War II, shaped the strategies and demands of the Civil Rights Movement. Overall, this scholarship illustrates how local black activists and organizers in North Carolina encountered many of the same difficulties as their Deep South colleagues.

Chafe's *Civilities and Civil Rights* remains one of the most important works for articulating the ways in which moderation hindered the black freedom struggle from securing its most fundamental demands for equal justice. Utilizing Greensboro as "a microcosm for the state at large," this monograph argues that the state's reputation on racial issues could only be described as a "paradox" that "combined a reputation for enlightenment and a social reality that was reactionary." In order to explain the workings of the city and state's political system, Chafe argues that a "progressive mystique" or "a series of implicit assumptions, nuances, and modes of relating" ensured that any social conflict would be extinguished under the guise of civility.¹¹ However, as historian Joseph Crespino points out, by "treat[ing] civility as a 'mystique,'" this framework "misses the contingency inherent in political contests across the color line."¹² The need for a more provisional narrative, one that reaches beyond North Carolina's progressive reputation guides this study's emphasis on black

¹¹ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 5, 7.

¹² Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 286 fn. #3.

challenges to white conceptions of democracy and Southern manhood.¹³ Placing competing conceptions of manhood, democracy, and statecraft at the center of these political struggles, I contend that historians can better understand the contingent, or not inevitable, and contested nature of racial politics in North Carolina, the South, and the United States. Developing a gendered comparative perspective of white moderates and liberals, arch-segregationists, and civil rights activists facilitates a more nuanced view of how competing ideas of manhood intersected during the black freedom struggle in North Carolina.

How did white moderate politicians reformulate existing notions of manhood and masculinity in the South as they sought to attract economic investment and to deflect negative publicity? For his part, Governor Sanford employed a form of *realpolitik* to distance himself from the leaders of the black freedom struggle while simultaneously denouncing what he saw as the divisive and futile politics of massive resistance. Here, *realpolitik* implies a form of statecraft in which white politicians valued political realism and expediency over the structural reforms sought by black activists. In doing so, the governor recast white Southern manhood as grounded in economic prosperity and a diffusion of racial tension. Combining this with the rhetoric of Christian goodwill, Sanford hoped to redefine white men's roles as safeguarding the well-being of families and society writ large. If paternalistic, this gendered political performance stood in direct contrast to arch-segregationists' staunch

¹³ Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics*, 218; Rob Christensen, *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics: The Personalities, Elections, and Events That Shaped Modern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Press, 2009), 4; Preston W. Edsall, and J. Oliver Williams, "North Carolina: Bipartisan Paradox," in *The Changing Politics of the South*, William C. Harvard, ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), 418-419; Neal R Peirce, *The Border South States: People, Politics, and Power in the Five Border South States*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 113.

insistence that white men must maintain rigid segregation and legal discrimination as a bulwark against social equality or miscegenation. As Sanford carved out a middle ground between racial justice and Jim Crow, he fashioned a vision of deliberative democracy that aimed to convince segregationists and civil rights activists alike that placing power in the hands of the white plutocracy provided the only means of maintaining both social comity and social change.

The United States' position in a global context also influenced white moderates in North Carolina. As televised images of Birmingham reached a worldwide audience, the Kennedy Administration came under increased scrutiny in a Cold War atmosphere. After the Greensboro Sit-Ins, Governor Terry Sanford and his allies dedicated substantial effort to preventing North Carolina cities from becoming the next site of protracted, nationally televised civil rights drives. From 1962 through 1965, white leaders worried feverishly if urban centers such as Durham, Greensboro, Goldsboro, or Statesville would become the next Albany, Georgia, or Birmingham, Alabama.

This last point hints at what the political contests over civil rights in North Carolina reveal about the broader, complex connections between the local, state, and national movements. Historian Glenn T. Eskew posits that the struggle to secure racial equality in Birmingham demonstrated the need for historians to “understand the local and national movements,” where “the national movement acted as a liaison between the local movement and the federal government.”¹⁴ Yet, the difficulties encountered by black activists in North

¹⁴ Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 14-17. For another prominent work that echoes

Carolina testify to a different relationship. Despite the widespread involvement of all four national civil rights organizations— CORE, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—in the Tarheel State, the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations looked favorably upon Sanford and other white leaders. This is most likely because these more moderate politicians did not engage the language, or drama, of states' rights and massive resistance. Instead, federal leaders devoted increased attention to other, more troublesome states.¹⁵ Meanwhile, local African American activists drew on their connections to the NAACP, CORE, SCLC and SNCC to aid protest movements across the state.¹⁶ Whether advancing efforts such as the Freedom Highways campaign or voter registration drives, local African Americans sought to harness the human and financial resources of these national organizations to advance their broader goals.

Eskew's defense of an exceptional period of the local and national Civil Rights Movement, located in the 1950s and 1960s, can be found in Steven Lawson, "Long Origins of the Short Civil Rights Movement," in *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement*, edited by Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011): 9-37.

¹⁵ Alongside the well-known sit-ins at the Greensboro Woolworth's and the founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), both in early 1960, CORE's national director James Farmer, NAACP national director Roy Wilkins, and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) president Martin Luther King Jr. visited North Carolina on numerous occasions between 1960-1965 to encourage direct action campaigns by local activists. However, more "top-down" histories of these organizations often neglect this involvement, focusing more so on national events, King, and/or the SCLC, see David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: W. Morrow, 1986); Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987); On CORE see: August Meier and Elliot M. Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

¹⁶ This point reflects the importance of local leadership and organizing campaigns as evident in John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); and Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

In contrast to other studies that examine how white Southerners writ large responded to the Civil Rights Movement in a variety of ways, geographical differences remain crucial to understanding the relationship between the movement and white segregationists of all stripes.¹⁷ As sociologist Clarence Lang argues, historians of the black freedom struggle must increasingly grapple with intra- and inter- regional distinctions and commonalities. Lang insists on “attention to government processes at the city, state, and federal levels” and “an appreciation of the uneven patterns of political development, organization and mobilization among black communities across time and place.”¹⁸ Although certain local studies of the Civil Rights Movement also touch on the approaches of white moderate and liberal Southerners to direct action, a statewide perspective can provide insight into how ideas about manhood, democracy, and moderation played out in a variety of communities.¹⁹

The distinctive form of civil rights activism, along with the varied responses of the state’s white community, raise a number of fundamental questions about the history of North Carolina, the South, and the United States. How did North Carolina maintain its progressive reputation despite the upheavals of the civil rights era? What is the relationship between grassroots activism and negotiations between black men recognized as leaders and white men

¹⁷ See Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

¹⁸ Clarence Lang, “Locating the Civil Rights Movement: An Essay on the Deep South, Midwest, and Border South in Black Freedom Studies,” *Journal of Social History* 47, no. 2 (2013): 374; Also as historian Stephen G.N. Tuck asserts in his study of the “Long Civil Rights Movement” in Georgia, the “dominance of state politics and the idiosyncrasy of Georgia’s county-unit voting system,” demonstrate the potential for historical analyses that emphasize the movement’s implications at the state level without ignoring connections to local and national trends. This statewide analytical scope is also relevant in a state like North Carolina where the reputation of the state as a whole profoundly shaped white citizens’ responses to civil rights protests. See Stephen G.N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 8.

¹⁹ Prominent examples of such community studies that address moderation include Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights* and Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, esp. 83-86.

in the halls of power? Who controls the pace of social change in a given society? How did ideas about political moderation and political radicalism relate to expressions of masculinity? This thesis addresses such issues by focusing on four major concepts or themes that demarcate the struggle for racial equality in North Carolina: manhood, democracy, paternalism, and religion.

Gender and normative views about manhood factored prominently into Southern politics on both sides of the color line.²⁰ As historian Glenda Gilmore observes, in the late nineteenth century, the “New White Men” of the North Carolina Democratic Party drove black men from office through defamation and a “local black-on-white rape scare.”²¹ The vigilant protection of white womanhood served as the foundation of white masculinity during the Jim Crow era. White moderates like Terry Sanford faced the daunting task of redefining white masculinity in the face of vociferous defenses of a narrow vision of white manhood advanced by arch-segregationists. For example, Steve Estes argues that after the integration of Central High School in Little Rock Arkansas, arch-segregationists “blamed the defeat of segregation... on southern white moderates, who had exposed cracks in the ‘Solid South.’ Segregationists responded to moderate men’s heretical positions with attacks that depicted them as women, for in the eyes of the Citizens’ Councilors, no true southern white man would ever question Jim Crow.” Moreover, Estes claims that white liberals and “Southern

²⁰ Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Mind That Burns in Each Body: Women, Rape, and Racial Violence,” in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, edited by Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983): 328-49; Stephen D. Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman & the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

²¹ Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 62-63, 75-76, 83, 88.

journalists like [Harry] Ashmore and [Hodding] Carter [Jr.] did not view themselves as radicals or integrationists because they too hewed to the concept of honor, remaining loyal southern men even as they rewrote what that identity meant.”²²

Instead of embracing the language of race solidarity promoted by white supremacists, more middle to upper-class white moderates in North Carolina dissented from the prevailing iteration of white manhood in the South through different means and language. Clinging instead to older models of men’s responsibilities as heads-of-household, Sanford and his allies promoted respect for law and order as crucial to the mutually beneficial goals of racial harmony and economic investment. In this sense, Sanford positioned himself as the ultimate *paterfamilias* of the state, who provided for the state’s families and children through improved public education, broad-based prosperity, and social harmony. Moreover, white moderates emphasized their religious duty to promote charity and compassion for their neighbors of all races, without substantive alterations to legal segregation.

African American men’s willingness to lay their bodies on the line through direct action in the cause of racial equality compelled white moderates to redefine white manhood. For student and radical grassroots activists in smaller towns and cities, protest movements supplied disenfranchised black men and women with both a verbal and visual language of political respectability and dignity that negotiation with the white power structure could not. Meanwhile, middle-class black men, many of whom could vote in bigger cities like Durham or Wilmington, defined black manhood as prudent, competent political negotiation that

²² Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 109.

accepted realistic and gradual gains. Regardless of these generational and geographical differences, African Americans' assertions of equal rights to public space threatened to inflame arch-segregationist anxieties about interracial sex and economic competition. Pressure from both civil rights activists and white supremacists forced white moderates to reconsider masculinity within the existing political arrangements of the white South.

The story of white moderates in North Carolina also complements recent histories of arch-segregationists and white Southerners more broadly. The works of Joseph Crespino, Jason Sokol, and Jason Morgan Ward add diversity to the civil rights historiography by analyzing the perspectives, motivations, and actions of arch-segregationists who opposed the black freedom struggle through a shifting, varied language of resistance.²³ As Sokol asserts, “white southerners played decisive roles in determining the depths, and limits of change.”²⁴ Crespino and Ward examine white southern leaders to accentuate the rise of “practical segregationism” or “responsible resistance,” in which segregationists replaced appeals to white biological superiority with the rhetoric of individual and states' rights. Nevertheless, as civil rights activists applied pressure on North Carolina's white political leadership they pushed the limits of both moderation and racial traditionalism in the South. Yet historians of the American South and the black freedom struggle have yet to examine fully the interplay of

²³ Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*; Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*; Jason Morgan Ward, *Defending White Democracy: The Making of a Segregationist Movement and the Remaking of Racial Politics, 1936-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Drawing on these more recent works, my thesis attempts to forge a synthesis between grassroots history, and the high politics frameworks of older, more top-down histories of white moderate and liberal intellectuals, journalists, and businessmen, including: Morton Sosa, *In Search of the Silent South: Southern Liberals and the Race Issue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); John T. Kneebone, *Southern Liberal Journalists and the Issue of Race, 1920-1944* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Elizabeth Jacoway, and David R. Colburn, *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

²⁴ Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 9.

rhetoric, strategies, and motivations between white moderates, black activists, and arch-segregationists in the South during this period.²⁵

The political struggles in North Carolina between these three groups of actors offer an instructive case study on how opposing visions of social change and democracy occurred within a dynamic milieu. Sanford and his allies portrayed both civil rights activists and arch-segregationists as unrealistic and divisive groups that threatened North Carolina's reputation for racial progressivism. As civil rights direct action campaigns escalated throughout the state, Sanford attempted to mollify opposition from militant segregationists by demanding that protesters express their grievances civilly through negotiation rather than demonstration. Sanford also rejected the logic of reactionary segregationists by engaging in dialogue with civil rights leaders and promising gradual, piecemeal reforms in order to shore up black electoral support.

Sanford embraced certain language of social responsibility and paternalism because he and white moderates viewed themselves as the best positioned and the most capable group to mediate and regulate the pace of social change in the mutual interest of social harmony and progress. Moreover, white moderates demanded that black leaders renounce the politics

²⁵ A few recent historians interpret moderation as a coherent set of political principles that are evident across time and geography. Studies of moderate statecraft in the United States, namely Robert Calhoon's study of moderation in the early American republic, guide my decision to term Sanford as a moderate. Although imperfect and ambiguous, Calhoon's typology is useful in defining moderates as "persons who intentionally undertake civic action, at significant risk or cost, to mediate conflicts, conciliate antagonisms, or find middle ground," Robert M. Calhoon, *Political Moderation in America's First Two Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6; On white moderates and race: Matthew D. Lassiter, and Andrew B. Lewis, eds., *A Moderate's Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998); Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Anders Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown v. Board to Stall Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

of direct action protest in return for limited seats at the negotiating table where more measured, “realistic” reforms to the Southern racial order could be formulated. Black leaders and organizers, however, remained both undeterred in the face of vociferous opposition from more militant segregationists and unsatisfied by the governor’s assurances for reform. As a result, they forged a message that promoted democratic participation and their power as constituents rather than deferring to white moderate politicians. African American manhood thus revolved around essential questions about the location and use of political power by communities previously excluded from the body politic.

In some ways, the tactics of black leaders during the civil rights struggle in North Carolina recalled Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr’s 1932 critique of social scientists’ “favorite counsel” of advocating accommodation to resolve contentious political issues. Concerning the position of the African American community, Niebuhr asked: “will not even its most minimum demands seem exorbitant to the dominant whites, among whom only a very small minority will regard the inter-racial problem from the perspective of objective justice?”²⁶ Niebuhr’s critique appeared prescient to the many black Carolinians who refused to accept negotiations that failed to produce immediate action in extending full citizenship rights to them. Whereas white moderates demanded that African American activists understand the political constraints and trust their judgment, civil rights demonstrators rejected such paternalism and asserted their own power as constituents who could determine the fate of North Carolina’s reputation for racial tolerance.

²⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), xxviii.

Sanford and other white moderates did avoid using the arch-segregationist trope that most African Americans in North Carolina remained content under Jim Crow. Instead of placing the blame on alleged “outside agitators,” who Jesse Helms argued only came to “spread their seeds of disorder, discontent and hard feelings,” white moderates, for the most part, recognized the grievances of black Carolinians as legitimate.²⁷ However, they also acknowledged the finite and tenuous nature of the “good will” and “tolerance” of the state’s white population. Responding to calls for gradualism to preserve the peace, African American activists flipped this logic of moderation on its head. Insisting that direct action proved synonymous with citizenship and masculine dignity, black men pressed white politicians to accept the urgency of their demands and thereby accord them equal respect as men and citizens.

Arch-segregationists inscribed their own views of manhood through gendered political performance. Countering civil rights activists’ emphasis on their own respectability and white moderates’ insistence on law and order, these white Carolinians trumpeted the threat of black criminality and miscegenation to social order. In doing so, hardline segregationists used the problems of the urban North to warn white Southerners about the dangers of integration and the need to defend their homeland against what they perceived as federal tyranny. In North Carolina specifically, arch-segregationists used the close ties between the Kennedy Administration, namely Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges, to portray Sanford and other white moderates as weak-kneed, yet devious men who sacrificed

²⁷ Jesse Helms, Viewpoint #423, August 10, 1962, North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [Collection hereafter referred to as NCC].

the purity of white women and the South for their own political gain. Concerns about economic competition from black workers also animated many white men's anxieties. Leaders of the Ku Klux Klan like Robert "Bob" Jones, along with more mainstream arch-segregationists, deployed rhetoric about the "forgotten" white underclass to counter Sanford's claims that economic growth depended upon scrapping massive resistance in favor of moderation.

Scholarship that stresses the importance of Christian rhetoric to the defeat of Jim Crow elides the ways that white segregationists constructed powerful religious arguments to justify resisting civil rights.²⁸ For example, arch-segregationist leaders such as I. Beverly Lake, a former assistant attorney general for the state, linked civil rights with atheistic communism, immorality, and an un-American disrespect for law and order. Here, these white men denigrated black manhood as aggressive, threatening, and hypersexualized. Moreover, Lake and others used the language of Christian persecution to portray white moderates and liberals at the state and national level as licentious, immoral tyrants who threatened to undermine the traditional way of life in the white South. The religious language employed by white moderates, by contrast, charged that white supremacists failed to grasp that the goal of

²⁸ For example, historian David Chappell presents a cogent argument that the Civil Rights Movement succeeded because African American activists used white Southerners' "holy texts- the Bible and their Constitution," against them. See David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), xxi; David L. Chappell, *Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); However, other recent works stress the ways in which segregationists developed political strategies that utilized religious, legal, and Constitutional rhetoric and strategies for combating the demands of the movement or avoiding the mandates of the federal government. For examples of white politicians who sought to evade the *Brown* decision, see Anders Walker, *Ghost of Jim Crow*; and Jason Morgan Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, esp. 67-178; For religious and cultural arguments that countered the Christian appeals of African American ministers and activists, see Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, esp. 144-172, 237-266, 276.

maintaining social order did not exclude white Southerners from adhering to the biblical message to love their neighbors.

This thesis hopes to show how contending ideas about manhood, democracy, and Christianity shaped the Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina between 1960 and 1965. The first chapter looks at Sanford's coming of age and entrance into politics, especially in relation to the state's history as a means of understanding his sensibilities as governor. On one hand, he witnessed the South's deep-seated racial and religious prejudices, had been raised to identify with the Democratic Party as the party that resurrected the post-Civil War South and admired an ardent champion of white supremacy. On the other hand, especially during his years at UNC, Sanford understood government's ability to provide economic security with the New Deal, learned of the incompatibility of Jim Crow with the principles of liberal democracy and Protestantism. Drawing on the memory of Charles B. Aycock, who served as governor from 1901 to 1905 and promoted expanding education, and Frank Porter Graham, President of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1930 to 1949 and a mentor to him, Sanford emphasized public education as the wellspring of racial harmony and economic prosperity. By the time he ran for governor in 1960, Terry Sanford had already seen how the diametrically opposed forces of black activism and white supremacy often hemmed white moderates into defensive postures that made them appear weak and vacillating in statewide electoral contests. To avoid this, Sanford's campaign for governor, along with his early policy ideas, exemplified a vision of white Southern manhood in which honorable, moderate political leadership steered the region to align with a national model of

modern economies and national educational systems. Moreover, this emphasis on an “honorable” response to *Brown v. Board* and African American activism exemplified a re-definition of white Southern manhood that abstained from political demagoguery and discarded traditional ideas that associated masculinity with defending white womanhood.

Chapter Two considers the ways that the 1962 Freedom Highways movement created a situation where black activism, combined with a forceful response from militant segregationists, forced Terry Sanford to re-define white masculinity and the politics associated with it. State and local African American leaders launched the Freedom Highways Campaign with the assistance of CORE. The combined efforts of local and national activists built upon existing networks, structures, and extant direct action campaigns to push for the desegregation of prominent restaurant and hotel chains along the state’s highways. The response of local law enforcement, which included beatings of black activists and spraying them with pesticides, exposed the depth of white brutality simmering under the surface in this “progressive” upper South state. It also undermined Sanford’s resolute demand for “law and order” as a prerequisite for negotiations. Thus, the Freedom Highways campaign brought all three competing versions of manhood into full view.

The third chapter of this thesis investigates Sanford’s evolving response to civil rights campaigns through the establishment of the statewide Good Neighbor Council (GNC). The massive urban protests of 1963 and 1964 tested ability of the statewide GNC and similar local bi-racial committees to replace direct action with negotiation. The successes of such committees’ insistence on law and order varied between divisions within African American

activists based on class, generation, and urban or rural settings. When white politicians and businessmen stonewalled their demands, black leaders employed protests as a means of both demonstrating their masculine dignity and bringing outside intervention to meet their demands. Guided by their conviction that direct action strengthened the electoral prospects of arch-segregationists, white moderates presented themselves as the reasonable protectors of the state's reputation and economic prosperity.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive remembrances of Terry Sanford's tenure as governor, I do not seek is not to judge this beloved political figure by contemporary standards. Although scholars have rightly emphasized the importance of the political constraints that limited Sanford's ability to endorse fully the cause of civil rights activists, it remains problematic to imply that such realism should exculpate white moderates. This is especially true when we consider that both African American leaders and arch-segregationists rejected Sanford's moderation as insufficient on a number of levels. Although by the end of the 1960s, African Americans and more moderate-to-liberal whites would form the main coalition of the Democratic Party in the South, this story points to the origins of the inherent tensions and fault lines in this political alliance.

For the leaders of the black freedom struggle in North Carolina, discrimination that denied them their rights as men, women, and citizens needed immediate eradication regardless of political or social circumstances. In many ways, this historical discourse on the possibilities and impossibilities of political action echo the ideas of German sociologist Max Weber. In his "The Profession and Vocation of Politics," Weber conjectures, "what is

possible would not have been achieved, if... people had not repeatedly reached for the impossible.”²⁹ Therefore, this study seeks to understand Sanford not as a saint, but instead as a human being who possessed a great hope for the future of North Carolina, the South, and the nation. Moreover, it posits that placing contested notions of gender and race at the center reveals a more complex, unsettled story about white moderation and its discontents.

²⁹ Peter Lassman, and Ronald Speirs, eds. *Max Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 352-359; for a connection between Weber’s ideas and Abraham Lincoln’s relationship to abolitionism, see also Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York: Norton, 2010), xviii- xix.

CHAPTER 1:
Fighting for a New Day: Terry Sanford and Jim Crow North Carolina, 1896-1961

The North Carolina encountered by two groups of Freedom Riders, the first in 1947 and the second in 1961, could not have been more different. Despite using similar strategies of non-violent civil disobedience and following a similar route, none of the 1961 riders ended up on a chain gang, none received beatings from white cab drivers, and no white mobs chased them out of any city. Instead, these instances of violence characterized the white, Southern “hospitality” that greeted the first group who arrived in the university town of Chapel Hill in 1947.³⁰ These earlier Freedom Riders, sponsored by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Journey of Reconciliation (JOR) did challenge Jim Crow. But in Chapel Hill, at least, they also provided an example of the depth of white men’s commitment to defending their towns and their homes against breaches of the established racial order. For a state that prided itself as a beacon of racial harmony in the South during the 1960s, the paucity of violence in 1961 could appear to signal remarkable progress. However, the responses of the state’s white citizens to African American direct action between 1947 and 1961 bore few marks of consensus when it came to civil rights. Rather, the political battle waged in the state’s Democratic gubernatorial campaign of May 1960 set the stage for what would follow.

Despite its reputation for racial tolerance, as popularized by V.O. Key’s analysis in 1949, the politics of race and segregation figured prominently in major political campaigns in

³⁰ Derek Catsam, *Freedom’s Main Line: The Journey of Reconciliation and the Freedom Rides* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 27-32, 107-117 ; “Incidents Arise After Bus Seating Arrests,” *Daily Tar Heel*, April 14, 1947.

North Carolina during the 1950s and early 1960s. The 1960 campaign for governor pitted Terry Sanford, a white moderate, against I. Beverly Lake, an ardent segregationist. While Lake sounded and acted like the more infamous governors of the Deep South, urging white Carolinians to resist change and decrying any federal interference that would introduce it, Sanford and his allies emphasized the role of public education as a modernizing force that would ensure broad-based economic prosperity and ameliorate racial tensions in a gradual manner. Sanford's campaign posited a race-neutral vision of North Carolinians and Southerners as honorable, moderate people of good will. In this view, the social fault lines of race served only to impede economic progress, erect barriers to Christian community based on harmony and individual morality, while also furthering the agendas of "race-baiting" arch-segregationist politicians.

This chapter explores the origins of racial moderation in North Carolina as it relates to Terry Sanford's emergence as a major player in the state's politics. This analysis seeks to depict the importance of the Great Depression and World War II years as crucial to the maturation of Sanford's views on government, public education, and race relations. Beyond these years, Sanford's participation in the U.S. Senate campaigns of Frank Porter Graham and Kerr Scott also provided important lessons for Sanford on combating race-baiting campaign tactics. Despite Sanford's best-laid plans, African American activism in the form of the 1960 sit-ins, combined with a groundswell of resistance from arch-segregationists, tested the viability of Sanford's moderation, masculinity, and belief in white Carolinian's proclivity for good will.

Born in 1917, Terry Sanford's upbringing in rural North Carolina during the Great Depression and New Deal era instilled in him a belief in the importance of public service and the ability of government to improve the lives of all people, as well as recognition of the realities of the racial boundaries that always had to be negotiated. Sanford grew up in Laurinburg, a small Scotland County town in the southeastern part of the state not far from the South Carolina border. Both of Sanford's parents, Cecil and Betsy Sanford volunteered in the local Democratic Party, and they enthusiastically campaigned for presidential candidate Al Smith, the Catholic, Democratic presidential nominee who lost to Herbert Hoover in the 1928 election. Although other biographical accounts emphasize this election as Sanford's first indelible experience with white Southern prejudice, Sanford himself remembered drawing a different lesson from the 1928 campaign.³¹ Despite the entrenched prejudice that white Southerners held against Smith's Catholic faith, Sanford recalled that Smith proved incredibly popular in Laurinburg as a result of the widespread loyalty to the Democratic Party. In Sanford's view, "it was the traditional Democratic vote, compelling people to vote the Democratic Party that had been the friend of the farmer and essential to the party of Reconstruction versus the Republicans."³²

Such positive associations with Southern Democrats in the age of Reconstruction and the reconstruction of white supremacy that accompanied their return to power instilled a young Sanford with a particular vision of Democratic progressivism. Indeed, hearing stories

³¹ See Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 12, 241; Christensen, *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics*, 57-58; UNCTV, "Terry Sanford and the New South," NC Live Media Collection.

³² Terry Sanford, Interview by Brent Glass, December 16 and 18, 1986, Interview C-0038, Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) in the Southern Oral History Program Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [Collection hereafter cited as Southern Oral History Program].

about one of its central players, Governor Charles B. (C.B.) Aycock, profoundly influenced Sanford's political career. A notable white supremacist leader in the "fake rape scare" of 1898, Aycock's efforts as Governor from 1901 to 1905 institutionalized segregation in North Carolina. But he also encompassed attempts to modernize and expand public education.

The latter, at least, provided a model for Sanford. In his 1961 inaugural address, Sanford credited the arrival of North Carolina's so-called "New Day" to the efforts of past governors, none more than Aycock.³³ Viewing himself as the heir to Aycock's legacy, Sanford proclaimed that: "second-rate education for our children can only mean a second-rate future for North Carolina. Quality education is the foundation of economic development, of democracy, of the needs and hopes of a nation."³⁴ In a 1964 report on civil rights in the states, published by a group of white mayors, Sanford wrote glowingly of Aycock in the foreword: "despite disenfranchisement of many Negro voters... Governor Aycock advocated 'universal education' and said emphatically that he meant the education of all children alike."³⁵ Thus Sanford invoked only one half of Aycock's legacy, which did appeal to all of his constituents and buttressed his own policy goals. By ignoring Aycock's role in supporting racial violence to restore white men's political dominance, Sanford's message implied that if the state would move forward and leave the burdens of the past behind it, certain memories should be downplayed or, better yet, purged from public discourse. Despite his best efforts, many white Carolinians proudly championed this side of Aycock too. Yet Sanford's refusal to

³³ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 244.

³⁴ Memory F. Mitchell, ed., *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1966), 3- 6.

³⁵ Terry Sanford, "Foreword," *North Carolina and the Negro*, eds. Capus M. Waynick, John C. Brooks, and Elsie W. Pitts, (Raleigh: North Carolina Mayor's Co-operating Committee, 1964), vii.

endorse this heritage foreshadowed political strategies he would deploy to navigate the turbulent waters of civil rights. As Sanford's campaign and term as governor would indicate, he exhibited a manhood that defined courageous and honorable leadership as not whipping up racial bitterness, but instead uniting people behind a vision for a more prosperous future.

The experience of the New Deal and World War II eras also shaped the contradictory sensibilities between the Southern past inherited by Sanford and the "New Day" he envisioned for his state, region, and nation. During the Great Depression, Sanford's family depended on government support as his father Cecil found work at government jobs after his business failed. Meanwhile, his mother Elizabeth worked in the public schools, which remained open throughout North Carolina during the economic crisis.³⁶ These experiences instilled in Sanford a broader awareness of the deep-seated racial prejudices and the extreme poverty that plagued the rural South, while also furthering his belief in government as a force for good and the importance of the state's public education system.

After attending local St. Andrew's College in Laurinburg, Sanford moved on to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1937-1939, an experience that deepened his understanding of the battles over the past and future of North Carolina as well as the South more broadly. While at UNC, Sanford came under the influence of its President, Frank Porter Graham, by far one of the most liberal white southerners of his day. As Sanford recalled, Graham helped him realize "that it wasn't so bad to champion the cause of the sharecropper and the black and the working man that wasn't unionized and was being pretty much treated

³⁶ Howard E. Covington Jr., "Terry Sanford," in *The North Carolina Century: Tar Heels Who Made a Difference (1900-2000)*, ed. Howard E. Covington Jr. and Marion A. Ellis (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 513.

as chattel.” Also, by his own estimation, Graham’s leadership “had as much to do with influencing the generation that he presided over as any other one voice in the state. Not that they all went along... with every[thing] Frank Graham was for, but the spirit of it carried over. I could certainly tell it in my own period of involvement in state government.”³⁷ As a result, Sanford became more convinced that education presented the means by which the South could reclaim and re-appropriate its past in support of racial tolerance and cooperation.

Upon graduation from UNC, Sanford went to work for J. Edgar Hoover as an agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Then, in 1942, Sanford enlisted in the army and served as a paratrooper in World War II where he earned the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his participation in the Battle of the Bulge.³⁸ He returned after the war to get his law degree at Chapel Hill with, an increased dedication to his studies as a bridge into public service.³⁹ Both his education and his military service solidified Sanford’s belief in the ability of public service and government action to promote economic uplift and more cooperative social relations across class and racial lines. They also enabled him to identify the enormous economic and social changes underway that would transform the South after 1945. As historian Charles Bolton observes in his study of William Winter, a white moderate and governor of Mississippi from 1980-1984: “World War II, and the New Deal before the war, initiated major economic and demographic changes throughout the South, and as the war ended, southern moderates and liberals envisioned the possibility of more change for their

³⁷ Terry Sanford, Interview by Brent Glass, December 16 and 18, 1986.

³⁸ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 10-11.

³⁹ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 83-85.

region, even in the seemingly settled realm of race relations.”⁴⁰ Like many of the leaders that emerged from the World War II generation, Sanford retained his determination to improve the nation he had fought to defend.⁴¹ Sanford’s military service and education at the University of North Carolina solidified his belief in the ability of public service and government action to promote economic uplift and more cooperative social relations across class and racial lines. Still, he understood the paradoxes of tradition and progress, memory and vision, white Southern identity and national unity that defined his region.

Despite Chapel Hill’s reputation as an incubator for white liberalism, the 1947 Freedom Rides revealed the power of white anxiety about threats to Jim Crow. Although there is no record of Sanford’s reaction to these events, one can surmise that he admired and learned from the example of Frank Porter Graham. As a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Chapel Hill, Graham came to the defense of his pastor, Charles M. Jones, on a consistent basis. For example, in 1945, Jones and the church’s deacons decided to open its doors to black parishioners.⁴² Two years later, the pastor and his wife Dorcas used a friendly police officer to get the Freedom Riders out of jail and to their home where they hid the interracial activist group with the support of local white UNC students, some of whom took up an armed guard to protect the house.⁴³ By 1952, Jones’s dissent from the traditional racial

⁴⁰ Charles C. Bolton, “William F. Winter and the Politics of Racial Moderation in Mississippi,” *Journal Of Mississippi History* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 335; On the efforts of white liberals and black civil rights activists during this period see also: Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

⁴¹ Howard E. Covington Jr., “Terry Sanford,” in *The North Carolina Century*, 514.

⁴² Robert R. Korstad and James L. Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 22-23.

⁴³ Charles M. Jones and Dorcas Jones, Interview with John Egerton, July 21, 1990. Southern Oral History Program.

order led the Orange County Presbytery to assert control of the church on account of its pastor's "heresy." Although Graham, as a church officer, accepted the denomination's decision to "defrock" Jones, he also attempted to use his influence and his oratorical skills to aid the embattled pastor. Graham praised "our spiritually devout minister" who led "a Christ-centered Church devoted to the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, which transcend differences of race, color, class and doctrine."⁴⁴ The pastor and his wife later described the university president as a "fair" man who "did everything in his power" to help.⁴⁵ Graham's support for Jones and his use of Christian language to counter racial prejudice, without defying the established racial mores, affected Sanford's own ability to balance dissent with custom.

Terry Sanford's rise in state politics and eventually to the governorship thus emerged from and blended the examples of two men. Whereas Charles Aycock's legacy guided Sanford's belief that social progress through education could occur within the legal and social boundaries erected by the Jim Crow system, Graham's provided a different lesson. Indeed, a nascent understanding of white Southern manhood is evident in Graham's example. Instead of prizing the defense of white womanhood above other considerations, the university president tried to demonstrate how white men could redefine progress through education and interracial compassion based on Christian brotherhood. The edifices of legalized segregation would remain intact for the foreseeable future, although their roughest,

⁴⁴ Frank Porter Graham, *Summary by Frank P. Graham of His Written and Spoken Statements on the case of Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church* (Chapel Hill: 1953), 6.

⁴⁵ Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 29-30; Charles M. Jones and Dorcas Jones, Interview with John Egerton, July 21, 1990. Southern Oral History Program.

most brutal edges could be softened. In reality, Graham's moderate stance proved too much for many of his contemporaries, eventually ending both his university and political careers in North Carolina. Sanford would keep this powerful lesson in mind as well.

After receiving his law degree in 1947, Sanford left Chapel Hill to test his ideas and political acumen by becoming active in the Democratic Party, including his participation in bitter, racially-charged campaigns in the 1950s. He and his wife Margaret relocated to the city of Fayetteville where Sanford established his law firm and furthered his political ambitions. Despite having no connections to the community, he soon became president of the local chapter of the Jaycees and helped form a local National Guard Unit. Sanford also became president of the state's Young Democrats. One early indication of his aversion to white Southern traditionalism occurred during this time. In 1950, Sanford rebuffed U.S. Senate candidate Willis Smith's request to have "Dixie" played during his appearance before the organization.⁴⁶ The fact that Smith opposed Sanford's former mentor, Frank Porter Graham in a bitter, and ugly, campaign most likely informed his decision. Then, too, Sanford worked actively on Graham's campaign.

In 1950, Frank Porter Graham won the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate over hardline segregationist Willis Smith and two other candidates with just under forty-eight percent of the vote. This meant that Graham fell slightly short of the percentage needed to avoid a runoff.⁴⁷ The second stage of campaigning provided more difficult terrain for Graham with the emergence of an anonymous segregationist group known as the "Know the

⁴⁶ Julian M. Pleasants and Augustus M. Burns III, *Frank Porter Graham and the 1950 Senate Race in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 107.

⁴⁷ Pleasants and Burns III, *Frank Porter Graham*, 186.

Truth Committee.” Its members launched a concerted effort in the days leading up to the runoff that utilized race-baiting tactics, such as mass-distributed leaflets, to warn whites of the perceived consequences of electing Graham. Exploiting the racial prejudice of white voters, the leaflets argued that Graham supported integration of public schools, social equality—as a euphemism for interracial sex—and, and increased hiring for black men in jobs previously held by whites.⁴⁸ Smith and his supporters used these tactics to exploit the racial prejudices of white voters. Despite the counter-efforts of Sanford and the Graham campaign, many whites in eastern North Carolina, the region with the highest percentage of African Americans per capita, switched from Graham to Smith.⁴⁹ The choice between two types of white southern manhood that still yielded the margin of victory with voters could not have been clearer.

In 1952, Sanford won a seat in the State Senate. During his short stint in the legislature, he developed a reputation as an intelligent and pragmatic politician with an occasional independent streak. These qualities effectively allowed Sanford to establish and build networks with other state politicians.⁵⁰ In turn, his public profile increased as he established connections with local and state political bosses who proved helpful for a future statewide campaign. Serving as a campaign manager for Kerr Scott’s U.S. Senate bid two years later helped him further these connections, affirmed his moderate views on segregation, and allowed him to gain valuable experience in running a state-wide campaign.

⁴⁸ Pleasants and Burns III, *Frank Porter Graham*, 220-221.

⁴⁹ Thad Eure, North Carolina Secretary of State's Office, *North Carolina Manual (1951)* (Raleigh: Owen G. Dunn Co., 1951), 237-240.

⁵⁰ John Drescher, *Triumph Of Good Will*, 3-4, 13-14.

Sanford had the chance to redeem Graham's loss and test his ideas in what became known as "the Third Primary," as former governor Kerr Scott, who served between 1949 and 1953, challenged Alton Lennon, a combative segregationist, for the U.S. Senate seat that Willis Smith had occupied until his sudden death in 1953. In recognition of Sanford's expertise, connections to middle-class, urban whites and businessmen, and youthful energy, Scott named him his campaign manager. As a liberal former governor, Scott oversaw a powerful political organization called "the Branchhead Boys," which centered on his electoral base of rural politicians and "courthouse crowds."⁵¹ Sanford's connections to the crucial electorates of white professionals and industrial workers balanced the Scott campaign's strengths in rural areas.⁵²

Sanford soon had the opportunity to employ all he had learned from previous experience. A fake ad for Scott appeared in the *Winston-Salem Journal* four days before the election, and praised the candidate's support for racial equality. After witnessing Graham's defeat in 1950, Sanford knew how to respond. Refusing to go on the defensive, Sanford went on the counterattack. He convinced his friend Jonathan Daniels, editor of the *Raleigh News and Observer*, to run a story the day before the election hinting at a possible FBI investigation into the phony ads. For his part, Sanford depicted the fake ad as an example of "desperate" and "dirty politics."⁵³ Sanford's efforts boosted Scott's fortune and he defeated

⁵¹ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 14-15; For more on Scott's campaign and Sanford's role in it, see Julian M. Pleasants, *The Political Career of W. Kerr Scott: The Squire from Haw River* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 240-270.

⁵² During Graham's U.S. Senate campaign, Sanford's role included voter registration and mobilization of both laborers and managers in mill precincts across the state.

⁵³ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 139.

Lennon for the U.S. Senate seat. Meanwhile, in the jubilation of victory, one of Scott's supporters boldly predicted that "race will never again raise its ugly head" in North Carolina politics.⁵⁴

They crowed prematurely. The backlash against the *Brown* decision combined with the rise of African American direct action campaigns further stirred the anxieties of arch-segregationists. Both Kerr Scott and Terry Sanford would learn again that race continued to represent a toxic, dangerous political issue for white moderate politicians in the South.

The continued staying power of white supremacist politics became more evident during the brief governorship of William Umstead (1953-1954), followed by Luther Hodges (1954-1961). Significantly, Hodges' five years as governor saw the rise of direct action by African Americans in North Carolina along with the emergence of the state's most vehement and militant segregationist, I. Beverly Lake. Hodges, a former textile executive and political novice, rose first to the lieutenant governorship in 1954 on the basis of his business acumen and his emphasis on the "North Carolina Story" of industrialization.⁵⁵ As historian Anders Walker notes, "because he rose up through management ranks, Hodges was less likely to see segregation as a hindrance to economic growth and more likely to view it as a mutually beneficial arrangement, perhaps even a bar to unionism."⁵⁶ For Hodges, debates over integration seemed counter-productive; instead he emphasized pragmatism, moderation, and economic stability. Moreover, once he assumed the office of governor after Umstead's death

⁵⁴ Anthony Badger, "The South Confronts the Court: The Southern Manifesto of 1956," *Journal of Policy History* 20, no. 1 (January 2008): 133.

⁵⁵ Neal R Peirce, *The Border South States: People, Politics, and Power in the Five Border South States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 123.

⁵⁶ Anders Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow*, 52.

Hodges faced the task of directing the state's response to *Brown* while also preparing to run for re-election in 1956.

Governor Hodges supported the work of two committees, headed by farmer and former legislator Thomas J. Pearsall. Initially appointed by Umstead, the Pearsall Committee developed legislation that would portray the state as complying with the *Brown* rulings while simultaneously appeasing arch-segregationist fears by effectively stonewalling meaningful school desegregation. As Hodges later summarized in his memoir, he supported the Pearsall Plan for upholding three principles:

first, the mixing of the races forthwith in public schools could not be accomplished and should not be attempted; second, attempts should be made to meet the requirements of the Supreme Court's ruling without materially altering or abandoning the existing school system; third, another committee should be appointed to give further study to problems arising from the court's decision⁵⁷

The state legislature passed the Pearsall Plan with overwhelming support. These results occurred despite an alternative plan developed by Assistant Attorney General I. Beverly Lake and his allies that would have given the General Assembly the right to close schools in the event of court-ordered integration.⁵⁸ After his one term as a State Senator ended in 1955, Sanford vocally supported the Pearsall Plan because he believed it a more "middle of the road" and because it came under attack by Lake and other vociferous segregationists.

I. Beverly Lake emerged as the leading voice for the massive resistance wing of the white North Carolina Democrats during the furor over the Supreme Court's decisions in the *Brown* cases. A law professor at Wake Forest University, Lake's introduction to public

⁵⁷ Luther H. Hodges, *Businessman in the Statehouse: Six Years as Governor of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 81.

⁵⁸ Luther Hodges, *Businessman in the Statehouse*, 101.

service began when he received an appointment to serve on the state Utilities Commission. This position led to his appointment as Assistant Attorney General, where issues of constitutional law and desegregation, not utilities, ultimately defined his tenure.⁵⁹ For example, after the first *Brown* decision, Lake denounced the ruling as an attempt “to condition your children, even before they are old enough to be conscious of sex, to accept integration not only in the classroom but in the living room and the bedroom as well.”⁶⁰ By emphasizing that the defense of white womanhood against allegedly ravenous black males represented the highest form of white masculinity, Lake and his allies equated Hodges’ approach to racial issues with unconditional surrender.

Lake’s growing popularity and raucous speeches fueled speculation that he would challenge the governor in the 1956 primary. In the aftermath of the *Brown II* (1955) ruling, which affirmed that states should desegregate schools “with all deliberate speed,” Lake gave a number of speeches condemning the Supreme Court, the NAACP, Governor Hodges, and the Pearsall Plan. One particular speech to the Asheboro Lions Club in July 1955 created a firestorm. In it, Lake suggested that communities create “non-profit, charitable corporations” to facilitate the formation of all-white private schools. These academies would serve safety valves against court-ordered integration, in which the state would subsidize tuition for those who wanted a segregated, private school yet could not afford one.⁶¹

Hodges came under immediate pressure to make a statement on whether he supported Lake’s idea. Although he would soon push for the same, state-issued “education expense

⁵⁹ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 39-40.

⁶⁰ I. Beverly Lake, qtd. in Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 74.

⁶¹ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 47.

grants” to subsidize private education that Lake had supported, the governor declined to comment.⁶² He also ignored a request from the NAACP to remove Lake as Assistant Attorney General. Instead, Hodges issued a statement declaring his “amaze[ment] that this private organization whose policies...are obviously designed to split North Carolina into racial camps, and which... does not actually represent any substantial portion of our Negro citizens, should have the effrontery to make such a request.” Furthermore, Hodges praised Lake as a “distinguished lawyer” whose services he wished to retain, while suggesting that he would always work “to save the public school system of North Carolina and at the same time permit each race to have its own schools.”⁶³ Statements like these, along with Hodges’ plan to give a speech outlining the state’s goal for a system of “voluntary segregation,” served as overt attempts to out-flank his main potential primary rival on the right. In 1956, Hodges won in an uncontested election. Nevertheless, white moderate politicians in North Carolina would continue to endure the criticisms of arch-segregationists who demanded more forceful, united resistance to the demands of civil rights activists and the Supreme Court.

Despite Hodges’ attempts to quell racial agitation and tension, his efforts ultimately failed to satisfy the demands of either side as civil rights protests escalated in the last few years of his term. In response, an intensified backlash from the white establishment at the local and state levels correlated with the rise of an increasingly organized and mobilized Civil Rights Movement. In the words of historian C. Vann Woodward: “All over the South

⁶² James W. Patton, ed., *Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers of Luther Hartwell Hodges, Governor of North Carolina, 1954-1961*, “On Operating the Schools Through Private Corporations, July 14, 1955” (Raleigh: Council of State, State of North Carolina, 1960), 561.

⁶³ Patton, ed. *Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers of Luther Hartwell Hodges*, “Reply to the NAACP Request for Removal of Beverly Lake, July 17, 1955,” 561-562

the lights of reason and tolerance and moderation began to go out under the resistance demand for conformity. During 1957, 1958, and 1959 a fever of rebellion and a malaise of fear spread over the region.”⁶⁴ The residual venom of McCarthyism in national politics certainly exacerbated it. In North Carolina, segregationist hysteria reached its apogee due to federal civil rights legislation and the Southern Manifesto.

The Southern Manifesto, or the “Declaration of Constitutional Principles,” emerged as the brainchild of Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Originally intended as a resolution of interposition, the declaration came to serve as a pledge of opposition and challenge to the Supreme Court.⁶⁵ The Patriots of North Carolina effectively pressured U.S. Senator Kerr Scott into signing the Declaration, who sought to stave off a re-election campaign defined by segregation.⁶⁶ In the cases of the three Democratic Congressmen from North Carolina who did not sign the Manifesto, only Harold Cooley survived re-election challenges from more hardline segregationists. However Cooley only won after taking a harder rhetorical stance toward *Brown*, race-baiting his opponent, and campaigning with Senator Sam Ervin, one of the Manifesto’s staunchest supporters. The other two, Representatives Thurmond Chatham and Charles Deane, refused to renounce their moderate position and lost their races.⁶⁷ Thus, as Hodges’ final term ended in 1960 the issues of race and desegregation served as the essential factors in determining his successor. According to

⁶⁴ C. Vann Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Commemorative edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 165.

⁶⁵ Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 116-117.

⁶⁶ Afterword, Scott attempted to rescind his signature from the document. However, he did not succeed in erasing his name from the list of signatories. Anthony Badger, “The South Confronts the Court: The Southern Manifesto of 1956,” *Journal of Policy History* 20, no. 1 (January 2008): 133-134.

⁶⁷ Badger, “The South Confronts the Court,” 137.

historian Charles Bolton, in the aftermath of upheavals among white Southern Democrats, white moderates saw clearly the toxic nature of desegregation as a campaign issue and therefore avoided mentioning it whenever possible.⁶⁸ Despite these trends, the 1960 North Carolina Democratic gubernatorial primary provided an unlikely victory for many of the state's white moderates.

Terry Sanford had nurtured his ambition to run for governor since his days at UNC. Although he had significant campaign preparation and a statewide network of supporters by 1956, he resisted challenging Hodges's run for a full term.⁶⁹ In the meantime, he toured the state, visiting all one hundred counties, received numerous endorsements, and experimented with various planks that would make up his campaign platform. Sanford also voraciously studied policy notes, such as transcripts of the Pearsall Committee's debates and information from local and state officials in Arkansas on the integration battle that had occurred at Little Rock's Central High School.⁷⁰ Also, he gave speeches in which he touted the importance of public education and urged white Carolinians to support the Pearsall Plan. For example, in a August 1956 speech to the "Junior Woman's Club" in the Hertford County town of Ahoskie, Sanford called on his audience to help the state achieve an "Age of Reason," in which the issue of desegregation would be handled "in the spirit of moderation and mutual respect and understanding." Moreover, Sanford further positioned himself as a moderate who did not

⁶⁸ Charles C. Bolton, "William F. Winter and the Politics of Racial Moderation in Mississippi," *Journal of Mississippi History* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 335, 345.

⁶⁹ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 30-31.

⁷⁰ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 31.

“keep company with the advocates of force, on either side, who believe that by intimidation and threats any satisfactory purpose can be accomplished.”⁷¹

By 1960, Terry Sanford had learned some valuable lessons. Beginning in the late 1940s, Sanford’s public profile increased as he established connections with local and state political bosses who proved helpful for a future statewide campaign. The lessons of 1950, however, made the biggest impact. In the Smith-Graham fight, Sanford saw the dangers of being a white moderate in a primary or runoff campaign where race occupied the central issue. In his notebook, he recorded observations from Graham’s defeat for use in later campaigns. Three statements became a centerpiece of Sanford’s strategy for addressing racial issues in 1960: “Don’t give them any quarter. Counter-attack on another issue. Don’t let somebody drag you into something you don’t want to do.”⁷² This quasi-military rhetoric indicates how Sanford adopted a more forceful, masculine posture to counter “race baiting” by arch-segregationist political candidates.

Sanford also put together a brilliant campaign organization that would prove invaluable to his victory. It included a diverse group of North Carolina citizens and power players: Kerr Scott’s “Branchead Boys,” the Methodist Church, the Jaycees, former UNC classmates, and the Young Democrats. Such a coalition allowed Sanford to portray himself as a candidate who valued traditional institutions such as Protestantism and volunteer civic organizations. Furthermore, Sanford gathered an experienced campaign staff, and relied

⁷¹ “Speech by Terry Sanford, Junior Woman’s Club, Ahoskie, North Carolina,” August 20, 1956, Special File: Governor’s Committee for Public School Amendment,” Box 131, Folder: “Speeches,” Governor’s Papers: Luther Hodges (1955-1960), North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC [Archive hereafter cited as NCDAH].

⁷² Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 5.

heavily on television advertising. Finally, Sanford became the first candidate in the state's history to utilize a pollster, Louis Harris. Collectively, these aspects represented novel advancements in the operation in political campaigns and served Sanford well in his first statewide race with a crowded field of contenders.⁷³

Terry Sanford officially announced his run on February 4, 1960 with a rousing speech in downtown Fayetteville that centered on his vision of a "New Day" for North Carolina. Sanford knew he had to move quickly to distinguish himself. In a number of newspaper interviews, the candidate pointedly discussed his recent endorsement from Charles Cannon, one of the state's most well-known industrialists.⁷⁴ Recent history, especially Hodges's in 1956, had proven that the support of and pressure from the state's business leadership provided a crucial factor. Cannon and others placed a high priority on the state's reputation for pro-business governance and relatively little racial tension. The Cannon endorsement supplied an early victory for Sanford's campaign especially because one of his opponents, John Larkins, a notable party leader and legislator, considered himself a close ally of the states industrialists and business leaders.⁷⁵ Larkins sought to distinguish himself from Sanford by emphasizing his attention to state politics and by painting Sanford as more interested in moving Carolina Democrats more in line with the national party. Larkins also judged Sanford as too liberal and opposed his willingness to promote new taxes to boost education spending, not to mention his more moderate views on racial issues.⁷⁶

⁷³ Christensen, *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics*, 180-181.

⁷⁴ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 67.

⁷⁵ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 67.

⁷⁶ Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 64, 206-207.

Despite the effective campaign organization, planning, and infrastructure amassed by Sanford and his team, events beyond his control soon brought questions about racial integration and civil rights for African Americans to the forefront. Throughout the campaign, he repeated his support for the Pearsall Plan and said he preferred not to discuss divisive issues that played upon people's fears and prejudices. Sanford could not stall for long. Just three days prior to his announcing his run, four young African American men had sat down at a Woolworth's counter in Greensboro and refused to move.⁷⁷ Within two weeks, other sit-ins surfaced in most of the state's other major cities including Durham, Fayetteville, Winston-Salem, and Raleigh. Over the next two months, sit-in movements emerged in smaller urban areas such as Salisbury, Shelby, High Point, Henderson, and Elizabeth City.⁷⁸ Facing a more complicated political calculus, Sanford initially kept quiet, which led many voters to demand that either he clarify his stance or mount a more impassioned defense of segregation.

The student direct action movement initiated in Greensboro lent a new sense of urgency to campaigns for school integration in urban areas that had been languishing since 1954. The lack of progress meant that their older, middle-class African American leaders had received criticism over their tendency to stand on the sidelines. For example, in a January 1960 address to the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity in New York City, Thurgood Marshall admonished black leaders in North Carolina specifically for their complacency and acquiescence to the Pearsall Plan.⁷⁹ The response in one of the state's most prominent black

⁷⁷ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 130-131.

⁷⁸ Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 76; Derek Catsam, *Freedom's Main Line*, 109; "Protest Leaders Plan Mass Rally In Durham Tonight: Martin Luther King to Speak," *Lexington Dispatch*, February 16, 1960.

⁷⁹ "Marshall Hits Acceptance of Assignment Plan," *Carolina Times*, January 2, 1960.

newspapers echoed the general sentiment of Marshall's critique. In the Durham-based *Carolina Times*, editor Louis Austin defended black activists in Durham, but castigated "Negro leaders in cities like Greensboro, Charlotte, Raleigh, Winston-Salem, Wilmington, and Fayetteville," for being "lulled to sleep by the state's flagrantly established program of token integration while Negro children continue to attempt to secure an education in inferior schools."⁸⁰

Moreover, the sit-ins helped invigorate local African American activists throughout the state, and thus raised the stakes for white politicians and their respective strategies for massaging "civil rights" to win the election. Everywhere protestors appeared, they presented themselves as well-dressed and dignified even as they endured verbal and physical threats from white citizens.⁸¹ In Raleigh, they targeted lunch counters and downtown stores and carried signs that read "we pray for our Southern brothers," where others asked "justice justice where art thou hiding?"⁸² Representing the values of respectability, masculine and feminine dignity, and Christian community, the student leaders challenged white perceptions of African American incompetence, complacency, and criminality. They also challenged white Christians like Terry Sanford to step forward and give true meaning to their rhetoric of Christian brotherhood.

⁸⁰ "A Timely Blast at Negro Leaders of North Carolina," *Carolina Times*, January 2, 1960. Since Austin did not castigate black leaders in his home city, it is worth noting, however, that the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs and other middle-class black leaders refused to endorse a 1957 sit-in conducted by Reverend Douglas Moore and a group of black youth at Durham's Royal Ice Cream Parlor. See Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 65.

⁸¹ "Students Protest Lunch Counter Segregation at Woolworths," *Carolina Times*, February 6, 1960; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 76-77.

⁸² "Negroes On Picket Line at Raleigh," *Lexington Dispatch*, February 16, 1960.

The burgeoning sit-in movement and favorable response to it from national leaders also fostered visions of unity among older black leaders and younger students. For example, the *Carolina Times* expressed its hope that “Negro citizens throughout the entire state could catch the spirit of the A&T students and support them by refusing to spend their money in F.W. Woolworth stores.”⁸³ Just two weeks after the initial sit-in, Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), attended a mass meeting at Durham’s White Rock Baptist Church. In his address, King exhorted the students and the community: “when the recalcitrance of some public officials in the South instills us with frustration and despondency, the spectacular example of determined and dedicated young people demanding their rights gives glorious inspiration to all decent persons not only of our nation, but throughout the world.” Going forth, King announced that activists across the region “are willing and prepared to fill up the jails of the South.”⁸⁴

Almost a month later, the executive secretary of the national NAACP, Roy Wilkins, addressed a mass meeting at Durham’s St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church. John Wheeler of the Durham Committee also urged activists to bridge generational differences and to make a “pledge of community cooperation.”⁸⁵ Four days later, Thurgood Marshall told a crowd in Charlotte that African Americans’ “unwillingness” to agitate for complete integration served

⁸³ “The A&T Students’ Sitdown Strike,” *Carolina Times*, February 6, 1960.

⁸⁴ Martin Luther King Jr., “Address Delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at a Public Meeting in Durham North Carolina, During Sitdowns by Negro Students,” February 16, 1960,” Folder 7133n: “Correspondence, 1949-1974 and undated,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers (1940s- 1980s), Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [Collection hereafter Cited as “Floyd B. McKissick Papers”], [Archive hereafter cited as “SHC”].

⁸⁵ “Program: Durham Branch NAACP Membership Kickoff Drive- Student Protest Meeting,” March 17, 1960, Folder 7133k: “Correspondence, 1949-1974 and undated,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

as the “only thing holding up integration in North Carolina.”⁸⁶ Martin Luther King Jr. returned on Easter weekend for a conference of student leaders at Shaw University in Raleigh, which led to the creation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Over the next week, Roy Wilkins spoke in Chapel Hill, and Thurgood Marshall appeared in Greensboro, where he addressed an audience in support of a voter registration drive.⁸⁷ Suddenly, it seemed, civil rights activities and its national “stars” popped up everywhere. The spring of 1960 thrust questions of desegregation to the forefront of all political campaigns.

As the state Attorney General and a leading gubernatorial candidate, Malcolm Seawell occupied a unique and prominent role in responding to the sit-in demonstrations. Seawell denounced the protests as misguided and that black students “fail[ed] to realize the vast devastating effect their sitdown [*sic*] demonstrations could have on the state of North Carolina.” Moreover, Seawell defended these segregationist policies on the basis of business owners right “to protect their private businesses from the invasion of any person, regardless of race, creed or color.”⁸⁸ In the end, Seawell’s posturing as the most qualified candidate to defend the state’s racial order also set him up for more vociferous criticism from more hardline candidates.

The Sanford campaign initially hemmed. An internal memo to Sanford questioned whether Seawell’s line of defense would hold up in federal court against the 14th

⁸⁶ Roy Covington, “Negroes Told Not to Slacken Pace,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 21, 1960.

⁸⁷ “Wilkins in Chapel Hill Sun.,” *Carolina Times*, April 2, 1960; “Ballot ‘Cheapest Weapon,’ Thurgood Marshall Tells Greensboro Audience Before Mass Vote Drive,” *Carolina Times*, April 9, 1960; American Friends Service Committee memo to Floyd McKissick, April 8, 1960, Folder 7133k, Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

⁸⁸ “Seawell Says Strikes Could Have Devastating Effects,” *Lexington Dispatch*, February 16, 1960.

Amendment's equal opportunity provisions. However, it also warned that "obviously" the candidate could not raise such a query lest he "be accused of advising negroes on law."⁸⁹ Most of all, the candidate and his advisors worried about the political consequences of diverging from the Hodges' avowed stance.

For Sanford, the media attention that followed this explosion of brazen, public protests against segregation in North Carolina held the potential to alter the focus and tenor of the governor's race. Yet the drama and urgency of African American demands for equality put him in a bind because his own solutions hinged on gradual progress in race relations through economic growth and improved education. Many of the state's major newspapers issued a joint editorial, which depicted the NAACP and Thurgood Marshall's involvement in the sit-ins as "an effort... to break down the reasonable barriers erected by the pupil assignment act." Thus, the papers warned, moderate candidates such as Sanford could expect "no help from Lawyer Marshall" in warding off the verbal barbs from arch-segregationists that portrayed the Pearsall Plan as weak and ineffective.⁹⁰ This editorial hinted at the anxieties of the Sanford campaign when it came to addressing the movement for integration. If it appeared that black civil rights activists could undermine the bulwark created by the Pearsall Plan, many white Carolinians might seek a more reactionary and bold candidate who would use gendered appeals to white supremacy and economic competition to garner political support. In short, African Americans' dignified, non-violent protests for equal

⁸⁹ Unsigned memo to Terry Sanford, Folder 340: "Speeches, Statements, and Background Materials, 1959-1960, Race Relations," Terry Sanford Papers (1946-1993), SHC.

⁹⁰ "Contrast in Thinking," *Raleigh News and Observer* [hereafter referred to as "*News and Observer*,"], March 22, 1960.

admission to public and private facilities, namely schools, heightened arch-segregationists' anxieties that black men would stop at nothing to gain sexual access to white women.

With the rise of the student protest movements, I. Beverly Lake wrestled over whether to enter the race as a one-issue candidate who could dramatically re-focus the Democratic primary onto the issue of segregation.⁹¹ Although Lake had been encouraged numerous times to seek some political office, he considered himself a lawyer and professor first, not a politician.⁹² Publicly, he announced he would not run and admonished Hodges, Sanford, and other moderates for allowing North Carolina to become a safe haven for NAACP activity. Privately, however, Lake let it be known that he might reconsider if he could garner sufficient funds for a campaign.⁹³ State Senator Robert Morgan led a grassroots effort and pledged to serve as his campaign manager, which led Lake to change his mind. Although Lake later admitted that he entered the race as a political novice with little campaign infrastructure or experience, he entered the campaign as the most outspoken opponent of desegregation.⁹⁴

Despite his reputation within the press corps and state political circles as one of the state's foremost demagogues, Lake's official campaign announcement promoted his candidacy as one of a staunch, yet restrained defender of segregation. Despite his insistence on a firm defense of Jim Crow, Lake avowed, "there is no room in North Carolina for

⁹¹ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 75.

⁹² Earl Black, *Southern Governors and Civil Rights: Racial Segregation As a Campaign Issue in the Second Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 217.

⁹³ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 76-77.

⁹⁴ I. Beverly Lake Sr., 1987, Interviewed by Charles Dunn, September 8, Interview C-0043, Southern Oral History Program Collection.

injustice, arrogance or hatred between people of different races.”⁹⁵ Many of the state’s major newspapers published editorials in response, sounding a hopeful, yet cautious sigh of relief. For example, the editorial board of the *Winston-Salem Journal* stressed that for white militant segregationists, “Dr. Lake may be the best available leader in the state to express their viewpoint in temperate and measured terms.” Beyond racial issues, the paper also praised Lake’s “thought-provoking platform,” which “embrace[d] most of the major issues that confront the state.”⁹⁶

From where Terry Sanford stood, the middle ground looked narrow. Seawell’s presence in the first primary helped Sanford avoid discussions about racial issues. As the state Attorney General, Seawell spent much of his time defending his role in the Hodges administration, particularly his work on the Pearsall Plan. Lake consistently criticized Seawell and Hodges for their more moderate position on the issue, which he portrayed as a concession to so-called “outside agitators” such as the NAACP.⁹⁷ For his part, Sanford openly supported the Pearsall Plan and described it as “the only workable solution.” On one hand, it appeared to comply with the Supreme Court’s rulings; on the other, it kept schools open and preserved social order by empowering local authorities to decide the best way to circumvent integration.⁹⁸ Unlike Seawell, however, Sanford worked feverishly to avoid discussing his views on race at all. Instead, he allowed the other candidates to debate desegregation while he hammered home his message of a bold, progressive initiative to keep

⁹⁵ “No Discord Yet,” *The Robesonian*, March 3, 1960.

⁹⁶ *Winston-Salem Journal* Editorial Board, “No Room for Hatred,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, March 3, 1960.

⁹⁷ Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 212.

⁹⁸ Black, *Southern Governors and Civil Rights*, 15-16.

schools open and improve education, which would, in turn, ensure racial harmony and unite voters behind the goal of achieving a “New Day” in the state. Couple that with economic development and North Carolina could lead the way for the entire South.⁹⁹

In Sanford’s view, the growing media attention directed at the student sit-in movement threatened to distract the campaign from more pressing issues that the governor could control. A March speech in Chapel Hill provides a case in point. Even in the supposed bastion of white Southern liberalism, Sanford faced challenging questions on how he would respond to the growth of black protest movements in North Carolina. In response to a question demanding that he “take a stand on the sit-down strikes and racial problems in general,” Sanford countered saying “racial issues have no place in a gubernatorial race because they can play on the emotions of people instead of reason.”¹⁰⁰

As his campaign manager Bert Bennett suggested, Sanford’s emphasis on educational expansion and improvement as the defining issue of the campaign proved effective for its broad appeal to voters. This ambitious plan touched nearly every aspect of education in the state, from expanding the community college system to raising teacher pay to providing more funds for libraries.¹⁰¹ The broad impact of Sanford’s education plan ensured that it appealed to a wide swath of the electorate. In one of his early campaign stops, Sanford spoke to a group of women in Greensboro at a time when pollster Louis Harris reported that Sanford trailed Larkins among women voters. Sanford’s speech to this group pointed out that transforming the education their children received would also involve ensuring that both men

⁹⁹ Bill Kezziah, “Sanford is Mum on Racial Issues,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, March 17, 1960.

¹⁰⁰ Bill Kezziah, “Sanford is Mum on Racial Issues,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, March 17, 1960.

¹⁰¹ Sam Ragan, *The New Day*, (Zebulon: Record Publishing Co., 1964), 9-10.

and women educators would be adequately trained and paid. In general, and with the help of an old friend from UNC in women's rights activist Martha McKay, Sanford continued to provide such women's groups with campaign literature on the poor state of public schools in North Carolina and how he planned to change it.¹⁰² Offering a positive, pragmatic message on a non-divisive issue, Sanford courted votes without discussing segregation.

Another notable aspect of Sanford's campaign included his openness about the need for increased taxes to pay for his education program. Although known for taking calculated risks, Sanford believed voters understood that major public expenditures required increased revenue, and would make sacrifices if they believed it contributed to a better future for the state as a whole.¹⁰³ Sanford's sensibilities correlate with political scientist Earl Black's typology of an "adaptive" white Southern politician, one who supported increased public expenditures on education or economic development as a central part of a campaign.¹⁰⁴ Such an emphasis on practical, "bread-and-butter" issue indicated Sanford's view that the governor must act like a wise *paterfamilias* who preserved the financial and social well-being of all Carolinians.

Sanford and Bennett's well-oiled machine continued to pick up steam as the primary wore on, and while the other candidates attacked each other over desegregation issues, Sanford's positive message and relentless campaigning kept him above the fray. This strategy placed him in good position going into the final month of the race. Predictably, once he emerged as the apparent front-runner, the other candidates started aiming their criticisms at

¹⁰² Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 213-214.

¹⁰³ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 116.

¹⁰⁴ Black, *Southern Governors and Civil Rights*, 18-19.

him. Opponents derided Sanford as “Terrible Tax Terry” and charged him with being a supporter of labor unions and the NAACP.

Lake would emerge as Sanford’s most serious competitor. For Lake, the critical error of past leaders lay in not providing the courageous leadership demanded by the majority of white North Carolinians. For example, in early May, during a televised candidate forum held by the League of Women Voters in Charlotte, Lake emphasized that any black child attempting to integrate a formerly white public school should be condemned as an “invader,” and dissuaded to voluntarily attend segregated schools.¹⁰⁵ Although Sanford could have easily criticized civil rights protestors and organizations in the manner that Lake did, both ideology and political necessity prevented him from doing so. African Americans comprised 10 percent of the electorate and Sanford had to hold his share of their vote. Thus, his rhetoric retained its inclusiveness as he balanced acknowledging civil rights protestors’ right to voice their grievances with his support for continuing the policies of the Pearsall Plan.¹⁰⁶ Yet, as Larkins, Seawell, and Sanford backed the Pearsall Plan, Lake’s criticism that it made North Carolina “the softest spot in the nation” for desegregation tested the limits of racial moderation in the first primary.¹⁰⁷

In the primary, Sanford won a commanding victory, receiving nearly 88,000 more votes than the next candidate, I. Beverly Lake.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, Sanford garnered only 41.3%

¹⁰⁵ “Lake Would Allow School Integration,” *Hendersonville Times-News*, May 4, 1960.

¹⁰⁶ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 133-135.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph C. Koennen, “Race Issue Faced Test: Today’s Primary to Tell,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 28, 1960.

¹⁰⁸ Thad Eure, North Carolina Secretary of State’s Office, *North Carolina Manual (1961)* (Raleigh: Owen G. Dunn Co., 1961), 228.

of the vote, which ensured that he would have to see whether Lake would concede or challenge the more moderate candidate in a run-off. In a press conference during this waiting period, Sanford derided the “absurd” nature of race-centered campaigns while also beseeching reporters and white voters to “assume some sort of responsibility and not play up the race issue.”¹⁰⁹ Lake eventually decided to keep going. This time, there would be no other candidate to shield Sanford from Lake’s attacks on his more moderate views.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Sanford understood his own vulnerability as the state’s top African American leaders would favor him in the run-off.

Despite Lake’s seemingly meteoric rise and his defeat of two more-experienced and well-known party leaders in Seawell and Larkins, Sanford had confidence that the lessons he learned from the Graham and Scott campaigns would allow him to fend off the arch-segregationist’s attacks. Going on the offensive, Sanford decided to paint Lake as a “dangerous extremist.”¹¹¹ For example, he portrayed his opponent as likely to move the state in line with the massive resistance policies of other, more belligerent Deep South states. Sanford reminded voters of the images of federal troops in Little Rock in 1957 to demonstrate the perils that would result from electing a massive resistance governor.¹¹²

For example, Sanford aides Bennett and Hugh Cannon passed along reports out of Little Rock that lamented how “new plants ceased coming to Little Rock and there was only

¹⁰⁹ “Race Issue Bitterness is Opposed,” *Greensboro Record*, May 30, 1960.

¹¹⁰ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 162.

¹¹¹ Christensen, *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics*, 183.

¹¹² Black, *Southern Governors and Civil Rights*, 109.

one expansion” in the three years after the events at Central High School.¹¹³ By contrast, Sanford would build upon his predecessors’ wisdom and continue to guide the state along the “North Carolina Way.” He also cited the state’s need for “massive intelligence” as opposed to “massive resistance.”¹¹⁴ Then Sanford went further to suggest that Lake’s hysterical rhetoric and dire warnings would actually bring federal interference and integration sooner than his own plan. By “injecting a false issue on integration,” Sanford claimed, “Prof. Lake... is inadvertently leading North Carolina directly down the road to complete integration, to federal troops, to closed schools. We do not want that, we cannot have that.”¹¹⁵ Modeling a more even-tempered manhood, Sanford suggested that white North Carolina voters should elect a governor who could stave off interference from Washington and thus dictate the pace of social change to suit the needs of the state. Such a performance demonstrated a cunning co-optation of white supremacists’ reliance on arguments for state’s rights or “home rule.”

Sanford’s gendered attacks on Lake also appear in his critiques of Lake’s childish, petty, and uncouth behavior, which he linked to class. In the days after Lake called for the runoff, Sanford portrayed him as out of touch with the experience of “90 per cent” of North Carolinians. In an address carried across radio and WRAL-TV, Sanford claimed that he “[knew] how the people of North Carolina feel about segregation... I did not grow up in an ivory tower on a college campus as the Professor did.” Asserting his personal connections with ordinary citizens of humble, rural backgrounds, Sanford noted that he “was raised around the cotton patches and the tobacco fields of Scotland County, and I know how to

¹¹³ *Raleigh Times*, March 21, 1960; *Arkansas Gazette*, June 9, 1960.

¹¹⁴ Christensen, *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics*, 183-184.

¹¹⁵ Jay Jenkins, “Race Issue in North Carolina Runoff,” *The Charlotte Observer*, June 5, 1960.

handle the situation better than a theoretical college professor.”¹¹⁶ Eliding his own connections to UNC, Sanford’s depicted Lake as a man lacking virility and practical experience. At the same time, his rhetoric countered perceptions of moderates as weak and effeminate while also seeking to undermine Lake’s populist appeal. In an editorial prior to the election, the *Charlotte Observer* echoed this language as it endorsed Sanford as a man “full of vigor and hope.” Lake, the *Observer* opined, presented voters with a candidate “wedded to the status quo, obsessed with false fears, who had pandered to the basest and rawest of human emotions.”¹¹⁷

In response to these verbal jabs, Lake argued that Sanford drew a false choice between massive resistance to integration and preserving a strong, open public school system. Drawing on the claim that six other states that kept schools open without integration or violence, Lake suggested that a “climate of opposition” to civil rights groups could roll back the token integration initiated at the local level. He also called out Sanford’s reluctance to address the issue head on by asserting that his opponent “[took] the position that its [NAACP] program for our state should not be discussed.”¹¹⁸

Sanford countered by insisting that no substantive difference existed between the two men’s stances on the issue of desegregation. Instead, it revolved around the rhetoric each candidate employed and the focus they gave to racial issues. By utilizing “reckless words” to appeal to “blind prejudices,” Sanford claimed the arch-segregationist obscured his own

¹¹⁶ Woodrow Price, “Sanford Slaps Back at Racist Campaign of Candidate Lake,” *News and Observer*, June 1, 1960.

¹¹⁷ I. Beverly Lake, qtd. In Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 43.

¹¹⁸ “Run-Off Called: Segregationist Lake Prepares Battle Lines on Racial Issues,” *The Daily Independent*, May 31, 1960.

staunch opposition to integration.¹¹⁹ Instead of differences on integration, Sanford claimed that fiscal policy represented “the true issue, the true difference,” as Lake did not support raising state revenues to pay for educational improvements.¹²⁰ Such statements effectively correlated with Sanford’s emphasis on educational improvements and the role education could eventually play for interracial understanding, good will, and cooperation. Sanford’s desire for a civil, tolerant environment to resolve racial problems preserved his reputation as a white moderate Southern politician in the post-*Brown* era even as he exhibited a white paternalism consistent with long-standing political sensibilities.

In a televised debate on June 13, less than two weeks from the run-off, Lake and Sanford stuck to familiar talking points about their own campaigns and the potential threats of electing the other candidate. Sanford argued that since the state enjoyed “best fiscal position” in years, “we should not try to change the [racial] climate” nor should the state “close the schools.” In response, Lake countered that South Carolina kept its schools open without integration or without the decline in the state’s “construction, farm income, and the textile industry.”¹²¹ In the end, Sanford’s aggressive tactics, superior campaign organization, and confident, optimistic style resulted in resounding victory. He captured approximately 56 percent of the vote in the run-off.¹²²

Sanford still faced a general election challenge from Republican Robert Gavin. Although in the one-party South, the general election had traditionally been an afterthought,

¹¹⁹ Jay Jenkins, “Race Issue in North Carolina Runoff,” *The Charlotte Observer*, June 5, 1960.

¹²⁰ “Sanford Hits Foe On Racial Issues,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 31, 1960.

¹²¹ “Sanford, Lake Debate On Air,” *The Robesonian*, June 14, 1960.

¹²² Thad Eure, North Carolina Secretary of State's Office, *North Carolina Manual (1961)*, 229.

Sanford's endorsement of John F. Kennedy for President over fellow Southerner, Lyndon B. Johnson risked significant political capital and created a tougher general election climate than anticipated. A number of white voters felt betrayed by Sanford's support of Kennedy at the Democratic National Convention because they equated Catholicism with Communism and the NAACP. In their view, Kennedy appeared to confirm some of Lake's charges about Sanford's racial views.¹²³ Yet, Bert Bennett had foreseen this potential problem and told Sanford, "History knocks seldom and when it does, you'd better open up." Bennett recognized that Kennedy's progressive vision and rhetoric, based on opportunity, inclusiveness, and a "New Frontier," proved consistent with the vision of a New Day that Sanford desired for North Carolina.¹²⁴ Including the presidential election Terry Sanford's campaign reflected both a continuation of the moderate approach of past North Carolina governors on desegregation with a liberal vision for bringing the state closer to national norms.

Sanford declared the arrival of a "New Day" for North Carolina in his inaugural address on January 5, 1961. To set the tone for his administration, Sanford credited the arrival of this new day to the efforts of past governors, beginning with Charles B. Aycock, and then predictably focused the core of his speech on education.¹²⁵ He asserted: "second-rate education for our children can only mean a second-rate future for North Carolina. Quality education is the foundation of economic development, of democracy, of the needs and hopes

¹²³ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 226-227.

¹²⁴ Bert Bennett qtd. in Christensen, *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics*, 185.

¹²⁵ Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 244; Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 3-5.

of a nation.”¹²⁶ This statement represented both an honoring of the past and a break from tradition, or the practice of past governors who believed in a top-down approach, assuming that industrial development would increase revenue and pay for school improvements.¹²⁷ Sanford’s emphasis on a “New Day” also purposely paralleled President Kennedy’s “New Frontier,” as he expressed his desire for “North Carolina to move into the mainstream of America and to strive to become the leading state in the nation.” Sanford truly believed that the Tarheel State could set an example for the nation in education, race relations, and industrial recruitment.¹²⁸

Toward the end of his speech, the new governor addressed the issue of race by saying: “we are not going to forget, as we move into the challenging and demanding years ahead, that no group of our citizens can be denied the right to participate in the opportunities of first-class citizenship.” This statement, with its progressive, yet ambiguous implications, demonstrated a notable shift in Sanford’s rhetoric from the campaign as he openly endorsed expanded opportunity for citizens of all races. Yet he matched this statement with an equally paternalist message that emphasized the role of the white community in “extend[ing] North Carolina’s well-known spirit of goodwill, of mutual respect and understanding in order that our energies and our resources... may be directed toward building a better and more fruitful life for all the people of our state.”¹²⁹ As Sanford began his tenure, his rhetoric of “good will,” moderation, and interracial cooperation, along with his legislative experience and the

¹²⁶ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 6.

¹²⁷ Korstad and James L. Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 33-34.

¹²⁸ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 6-7.

¹²⁹ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 8.

political capital he had amassed, would prove useful in moving his legislative program through a legislature dominated by entrenched interests that were generally averse to supporting wholesale changes to the status quo.

In comparison to other gubernatorial candidates and Southern executives, Terry Sanford's election as Governor of North Carolina in 1960 represented a repudiation of the "race-baiting" politics of militant segregationists in favor of more moderate leadership. Education served as the defining issue of Terry Sanford's 1960 campaign and his term as governor. Also he relied on liberal rhetoric that emphasized education as the key to lifting the South out of poverty and ignorance, while not addressing his views on issues of race.¹³⁰ As the Civil Rights Movement evolved during his term, Sanford's response to direct action reflected that of a *paterfamilias* striving to keep the community under his watch free from discord. In this masculine performance, white moderates needed to protect citizens of all races from the dangerous extremes of white massive resistance, on one hand, and the urgency and radicalism of civil rights activists on the other hand.

If Sanford's election buoyed the hopes of black leaders that he would hasten the end of systematic racial discrimination, they soon discovered otherwise. Sanford believed that equality before the law would only come gradually as the result of an educated body politic. Just as he had indicated during the campaign, Sanford prioritized strengthening and modernizing the state's public education system over securing racial justice. Toward this end, he endorsed a bold plan developed by the United Forces for Education, a coalition of various

¹³⁰ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 5.

educational interest groups, for \$100 million worth of new investments in education. However, the plan also called for the repeal of all exemptions to the state sales tax, which generated much controversy. Many of the plan's detractors frequently noted that repealing such exemptions would disproportionately affect the poor. These critics included the state Commissioner of Revenue who called it a "tax on poverty."¹³¹ Sanford stood firm, since he saw no other since Sanford saw no other practical revenue options.¹³² He said as much when he appeared before the General Assembly to sell this program. Sanford informed state legislators that he had "considered every possible source of taxation," even while he reminded them that the state taxes on alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and tobacco could not be raised any higher.¹³³ Sanford knew the success or failure of his educational initiative would provide an early signal, a piece of legislation that provided an early signal as to whether or not he could effectively govern and advance major pieces of legislation from the middle while depending on a largely conservative, "hold-the-line" General Assembly.

However, in mid-April 1961, the education bill passed the House Appropriations Committee with substantial pressure from Sanford although the chances for the passage of the final bill remained dubious. In order to boost his legitimacy and political capital with legislators, Sanford pushed through popular, smaller bills that reorganized the state bureaucracy while also using his appointment powers to attract favorable votes in the

¹³¹ Thomas F. Eamon, "The Seeds of Modern North Carolina Politics." In *The New Politics of North Carolina*, eds. Christopher A. Cooper and H. Gibbs Knotts (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 25-27.

¹³² Ragan, *The New Day*, 7.

¹³³ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 28-29.

legislature.¹³⁴ Since the North Carolina state constitution weakened the executive position and codified it with limited formal powers, Sanford used creative maneuvers to help pass the education bill.¹³⁵ He also took his message directly to the people, speaking across the state. For example, the governor held two rallies in Smithfield and Goldsboro, where he spoke about the state's poor standing in terms of education when compared to the rest of the nation. In this he also frequently pointed out that North Carolina ranked eighth in terms of the number of pupils enrolled in the public school system. From these humbling statistics, Sanford reminded the crowd of the importance of these future generations, saying: "this is our greatest asset. But we have cultivated our children's minds less well than we have cultivated our tobacco and peanut and cotton acres. We have given proportionally less attention to the maintenance of schools than we have to the maintenance of wardrobes, our automobiles, and our kitchen stoves."¹³⁶

The final vote ended up being more decisive than expected as Sanford's bill passed the Senate by a 42 to 8 vote, and the House by an 85 to 38 vote.¹³⁷ Sanford's educational initiative brought major improvements to the state's schools and universities. Teacher pay raises increased by an average of 22 percent, moving the state up from 39th to 32nd in the national rankings of teacher pay. It also provided funding to add 2,826 secondary school teachers over the next three years. State college faculty received pay increases as well.¹³⁸ Despite this great victory, North Carolina voters rejected a bond referendum that would pay

¹³⁴ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 258.

¹³⁵ Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 247.

¹³⁶ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 115-116.

¹³⁷ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 259.

¹³⁸ Ragan, *The New Day*, 47.

for further educational improvements, along with port and other industrial bonds, , in the November election. They had not done so in thirty-seven years.¹³⁹ Having spent considerable political capital on his educational vision, Sanford continued to exemplify the moderate leadership that he had promised during the campaign, as he invested in providing a better quality of life for North Carolina's future generations while not disrupting the status of segregated schools in the state.

Yet a political pragmatist like Sanford knew that he could not avoid the issue of integration and public schools. Instead, he tried to sidestep it by calling attention to class issues. With confidence from his legislative victory and the General Assembly not in session, Sanford gave numerous speeches across the South and the nation on the importance of public education.¹⁴⁰ One significant speech occurred in Columbia, South Carolina, where Sanford accentuated the need for a united, regional front to improve education. In this speech, he drew upon traditional Southern imagery by claiming that the region would be “rising again through education, through industry, through commerce, and through agriculture” and that instead of “firing on Fort Sumter... We will be firing on the dungeons of ignorance.”¹⁴¹ In a November 1962 speech, for example, Sanford declared that education represented “a new kind of emancipation proclamation” that would “set us free from the drag of poor people, poor schools, from hate, from demagoguery.”¹⁴² Sanford saw education not only as the engine behind the South's economic modernization, but also as the source of more amicable

¹³⁹ Sen. Henson P. Barnes, *Work in Progress: The North Carolina Legislature* (Raleigh: North Carolina General Assembly, 1993), 308.

¹⁴⁰ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 260-261.

¹⁴¹ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 150-158.

¹⁴² Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 304.

human relations and racial understanding.¹⁴³ However Sanford's education speeches made no explicit mention of segregation or other racial issues. That was as close as he came to explicitly linking race, class, and integration of public schools.

The question of where Sanford and his wife Margaret would send their two children to attend school proved more problematic than supporting better-funded public education systems. The family had to choose between Ravenscroft School, an all-white, private academy, or Raleigh's Murphy School, one of the few public schools that had desegregated in the state.¹⁴⁴ Although the Sanford's did send their children to the Murphy School, it only had one black student enrolled at the time. Sanford frequently noted this distinction in order to deflect any criticisms about his children attending an "integrated school."¹⁴⁵ Indeed, as the school desegregation issue proved fraught with white anxiety about "race-mixing," Sanford consistently reasserted his campaign position that decisions on integration should be made by local authorities.¹⁴⁶

These choices point toward Sanford's strategy of managing racial tensions without altering the boundaries of the Jim Crow order. They also highlight the governor's recasting of white Southern manhood as he encouraged interracial, Christian brotherhood and individual benevolence based on the "Golden Rule." By valuing public education as the wellspring of social change and economic growth, and thus ensuring racial harmony, Sanford assumed the role of a *paterfamilias* for the state. In doing so, he struggled against traditional

¹⁴³ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 103.

¹⁴⁴ Paul Luebke, *Tar Heel Politics* (2000), 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 141-142.

¹⁴⁵ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 251.

¹⁴⁶ Terry Sanford, Interview by Brent Glass, December 16 and 18, 1976.

notions of white masculinity, built upon the defense of white womanhood, in order to pursue policies that he believed would bring broad-based economic prosperity that would ease racial anxieties and end protests.

As civil rights protests multiplied across the state, the governor's constituents of both races looked to him for decisive leadership. Striving to cultivate a social climate of good will, Sanford would utilize the limited powers of the Governor to demonstrate his recognition of black grievances with piecemeal reforms. For example, Sanford quietly worked to desegregate the state parks system and appointed over a dozen African American leaders to various positions in state government.¹⁴⁷ Such symbolic gestures achieved little progress toward racial justice and fed the growth of direct action campaigns that would test Sanford's position that persuasion, gradualism, and education provided the best way to ensure both social change and racial harmony. When rhetoric and persuasion failed to satiate these growing protest movements, Sanford relied on a more reactive policy in addressing black grievances.

The first manifestation of this strategy emerged with the arrival of the 1961 Freedom Riders who sought to test the state's adherence to federal laws outlawing segregated seating in interstate travel. This method first appeared under Sanford's watch as the Freedom Riders headed south in 1961 to test states' adherence to Federal laws outlawing segregated seating in interstate travel. Sanford's response epitomized what scholar Anders Walker describes as a "quiet, non-confrontational approach."¹⁴⁸ Facing the threat for escalated racial tensions,

¹⁴⁷ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 104, 276.

¹⁴⁸ Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow*, 128-129.

Sanford sought out the advice of Thomas Pearsall in handling this situation. Pearsall gave Sanford a number of recommendations, including constant communication with the Highway Patrol, local police forces, and Attorney General's Office to ensure that the demonstrations remained peaceful and orderly in accordance with state law.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Pearsall advised that the governor should make a public statement declaring his intent to "determination to preserve law and order in North Carolina at all cost."¹⁵⁰

Sanford's support for "law and order" empowered local officials with the flexibility to address these issues as they saw fit. When no instances of violence greeted the Freedom Riders in North Carolina, it appeared as though Sanford's tactics set a dangerous precedent for future civil rights campaigns. In other words, the absence of violence gave credence to white moderates' faith in law and order as a required pre-requisite for discussion and gradual reform to the social order. Observing Sanford's adopting the rhetoric of law and order while failing to take action to generate substantive change, many black leaders came to view the governor as misleading and ineffectual at best.

Indeed, for African American civil rights activists, the co-occurrence of the 1960 election and the sit-in movement confirmed that direct action and voter registration could be used to great effect without empowering hardline segregationists like I. Beverly Lake. Moreover, their emphasis on the dignity of black manhood and womanhood through non-violent protest advanced their claims to equal citizenship. Paradoxically, their use of non-

¹⁴⁹ Thomas J. Pearsall to Terry Sanford, May 29, 1961, Box 133, Folder: "Segregation O-Q," Governor's Papers: Terry Sanford (1961-1965), Raleigh: NCDAH [Collection hereafter cited as "Governor Terry Sanford Papers"].

¹⁵⁰ Thomas J. Pearsall to Terry Sanford, May 29, 1961, Box 133, Folder: "Segregation O-Q," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

violent methods succeeded in drawing the kind of attention that could prompt the governor to act when it generated a violent response by white citizens or white authorities. Relying on non-violence exclusively exhibited manly restraint for many African American men.

Although for many of their comrades both in the Tarheel State and the nation, non-violence represented only one, often unreliable tactic, to perform their masculinity and protect the lives and dignity of black communities. These displays of respectable manhood further defied white perceptions that African American men only sought equal rights in order to defile white womanhood. Moreover, movement leaders' use of religious language forced Sanford and his white moderate followers to consider whether they misplaced their confidence in the Christian goodwill of the state's white citizens.

As sustained direct action campaigns escalated throughout North Carolina and the South in the remaining years of Sanford's term, their different understandings of manhood and democracy clashed. By focusing on public education as the primary engines of social change and economic growth, Sanford took on the role of a *paterfamilias* for the state. In doing so, he fought against traditional notions of white masculinity as the defense of white womanhood to pursue policies that he believed would bring broad-based economic prosperity in order to calm racial fears and end protests. Yet, as Sanford discovered during the campaign, the Civil Rights Movement proved intractable and difficult to contain.

In contrast to the naive belief that Kerr Scott's 1952 victory signaled an end to race-baiting politics, Governor Terry Sanford held no such illusions. In the aftermath of the 1960 campaign, he knew that nothing would follow a pre-determined course. The unpredictable

actions of men and women on both sides of the color line shaped events. Deep down, Terry Sanford also knew that these grassroots movements could obviate, if not completely derail, the interracial consensus he hoped would eventually emerge to keep the state on a different path than the rest of the South. Despite their intense opposition to Lake, African American civil rights activists certainly did not view Sanford as their political savior. But they saw clearly that outside perceptions of North Carolina's reputation for more temperate race relations mattered a great deal to people both inside and outside the state, namely white politicians like the governor as well as white business leaders. And so they attempted to force Sanford's hand by increasing their use of direct action throughout North Carolina for the remaining years of his gubernatorial term. By organizing and mobilizing activists within communities large and small, they would assert an altogether different understanding of southern manhood that demanded recognition from the state's white citizens, namely the governor himself.

CHAPTER 2:
The Tobacco Curtain: North Carolina and the 1962 Freedom Highways Campaign

One year after images of a burned-out Greyhound bus, bloodied Freedom Riders, and angry white supremacists in Southern streets appeared on television screens worldwide, journalist and North Carolina native Gene Roberts Jr. highlighted an exception to the solidly segregationist South. In his April 1962 editorial in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, Roberts lauded his home state's "independence" and willingness to assert its Southern identity "by its own definition." On the one-year anniversary of the Freedom Rides, Roberts recalled "In Alabama, the Freedom Riders faced mobs; in Mississippi they filled jails. In North Carolina they gulped their coffee, sat a bit awkwardly in white waiting rooms and left North Carolina without creating enough news to read for even a mile of their long, southward journey."¹⁵¹ Roberts' portrayal of North Carolina as an island of racial tolerance in the South proved consistent with the rhetoric of contemporary white moderates in the state, such as Governor Terry Sanford, and with subsequent historical accounts of Sanford's term in office from 1961 to 1965.

African American activists would have disagreed strongly with this assessment. Localized efforts to secure merit-based employment practices in the private and public sectors, to register voters, and to desegregate public accommodations and schools encountered delays and empty promises from state leaders. In fact, black activism in North Carolina throughout 1961-1962 illustrates how consistent grassroots pressure forced local

¹⁵¹ Gene Roberts Jr., "Southern Exposure: The Moderation of North Carolina," *News and Observer*, April 15, 1962.

and state authorities to accede to black demands or risk the state's moderate reputation on racial issues. In cities and towns across the Tarheel State, civil rights leaders understood they could use white leaders' desire to appear "progressive" to compel white businessmen and politicians to help end systematic discrimination. Drawing on the efforts of local people, CORE launched the Freedom Highways campaign in July 1962 in coordination with NAACP chapters to protest against prominent national restaurant and hotel chains that denied service to African Americans along interstate highways.¹⁵² From July through December 1962, local activists joined forces with national civil rights leaders and field staff to coordinate and escalate direct action campaigns in urban centers across North Carolina.

Although CORE's national leadership envisioned the campaign as an effort to target national chains such as Howard Johnson restaurants that enforced Jim Crow laws, local leaders effectively harnessed the campaign's energy and resources to challenge the structural injustices that contradicted North Carolina's reputation for racial tolerance. In doing so, black Carolinians also advanced the goals set forth by the national organization. Moreover, the Freedom Highways campaign built upon the urban networks of NAACP Youth Chapters, African American schools, universities, and churches that had organized school integration efforts as well as the sit-ins at Durham's Royal Ice Cream Parlor in 1957 and Greensboro's Woolworth's store in 1960. As a result, this five-month, non-violent assault on segregated

¹⁵² The Freedom Highways campaign has not been the subject of any full-length historical work; however, a number of organizational histories of CORE and the NAACP shed light on this specific campaign, along with the efforts of these organizations throughout the South. See: Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Derek Catsam, *Freedom's Main Line*; Meier and Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement*; Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New Press, 2009).

life in North Carolina presented a more difficult challenge for the state's white political and business elite when compared to the 1961 Freedom Rides. Whereas authorities quarantined the Freedom Riders to avoid brief, localized bursts of discontent, these pre-existing organizational channels allowed the national leadership of CORE and the NAACP to pursue more sustained direct-action campaigns in cities across the state.

By the end of 1962, SCLC President Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., CORE National Director James Farmer, and NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins had all visited North Carolina to promote the efforts of local activists to end discriminatory practices by private and public institutions. Despite the lack of consistent coverage from the national media, these prominent civil rights leaders considered the Freedom Highways campaign as important to the broader struggle as the campaign in Albany, Georgia that occurred around the same time. Both local and national civil rights leaders recognized that the white business and political elite in North Carolina needed their support to limit demonstrations, especially among younger, more radical activists, and thereby reinforce the state's reputation for racial fairness. Moreover, the black men who led and participated in this campaign asserted their rights as men and citizens to challenge white politicians. In response, white politicians could either side with the traditional white masculinity of arch-segregationists or re-define white masculinity based upon moderate politics.

Historians of the Civil Rights Movement in the Tarheel State have largely overlooked the significance of the Freedom Highways campaign in relation to the state's political history and the history of the Movement more broadly. This primarily urban civil rights drive

appears briefly in many community studies. This scant attention obscures how it challenged the moderate approach of state leaders that underpinned North Carolina's reputation for racial tolerance.¹⁵³ Moreover, largely hagiographical biographies of Terry Sanford emphasize how the state's white political class realistically and even-handedly balanced law and order with racial progressivism during the Freedom Highways campaign.¹⁵⁴ These accounts present Sanford as capably balancing the political constraints of the time, but ignore or de-emphasize the perspective of black Carolinians who agitated for political change.

Like previous and subsequent direct action campaigns, Freedom Highways activists encountered intimidation, violent reprisals, and token reforms from what historian Anthony Badger has termed the "closet moderates" of the state's white power structure.¹⁵⁵ Because it was not limited to one, local area this campaign provides insight into how statewide trends shaped the tactics of the black freedom struggle and the reactions of white liberals, moderates, and arch-segregationists. Although local people and networks proved crucial to the efforts of the Freedom Highways campaign, activists utilized the protests as part of a broader critique of the timidity of the state's white moderates who trumpeted its "progressive mystique." Black and white civil rights activists in North Carolina applied a gendered critique of moderate white manhood to secure structural reforms. For defenders of Jim Crow, Sanford and other white, southern moderates challenged traditional notions of manhood,

¹⁵³ See Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*.

¹⁵⁴ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*; Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*.

¹⁵⁵ Anthony J. Badger, "Closet Moderates: Why White Liberals Failed, 1940-1970," in *New Deal/New South: An Anthony J. Badger Reader* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2007), 102-126.

whiteness, and southern identity.¹⁵⁶ Meanwhile, a new form of white Southern manhood manifested itself as Sanford consistently sought to restore “law and order” to bring black activists off the streets while also countering arch-segregationist criticisms of moderates’ weak leadership and black lawlessness.

During the Freedom Highways campaign, the political climate created by black pressure forced Terry Sanford to recast white, Southern masculinity as consistent with social peace attained through law, order, and economic progress. Meanwhile, male black activists and white arch-segregationists also staked out their own claims to manhood. The African American men who participated in the civil rights struggle before, during, and after the Freedom Highways campaign willingly put their bodies in harm’s way as they sought inclusion in all-white spaces. They sought social dignity and equality before the law as both men and citizens. However, their assault on systematic discrimination in North Carolina exacerbated white segregationist anxieties about social equality and the need to defend white women against black men’s attempts to transcend the racial boundaries of Jim Crow. In response, the governor sought to portray both groups’ demands as unrealistic and their methods as uncivil and out of touch with the state’s reputation for racial tolerance. Instead, Sanford and his allies viewed themselves as men who valued reason, honor, and harmony as the guiding principles of moderate leadership in North Carolina and the New South.

¹⁵⁶ On black and white, Southern masculinity in the Civil Rights era see Steve Estes, *I Am a Man!* In regard to white identity in the South, historian Grace E. Hale asserts “as culture, southern segregation made a new collective white identity across lines of gender and class and a new regional distinctiveness.” See *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 9; James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 212-235; Angie Maxwell, *The Indicted South: Public Criticism, Southern Inferiority, and the Politics of Whiteness* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Despite perceptions of North Carolina and the Upper South as areas having less racial animosity compared to the Deep South, fierce debates over how much change the state could accept raged between arch-segregationists, civil rights leaders, and moderate to liberal politicians during 1962. Even after the Greensboro sit-ins of February 1960 sparked non-violent, direct action campaigns across Southern cities, black activism in North Carolina, especially among students, remained an active force in challenging the delay tactics of local officials. Although the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) would direct student activism toward rural areas in the Deep South, black youth formed a crucial part of local CORE and NAACP efforts in North Carolina's urban areas. In recognition of these organizational networks, the national CORE leadership launched the "Freedom Highways" campaign in the summer of 1962. Meanwhile, CORE and NAACP leaders at the local and state level effectively utilized the campaign to advance their own demands for economic justice and voting rights, while also expanding its geographic scope. These efforts linked Freedom Highways to a broader, structural critique of the state's white political elite who simultaneously defended systematic segregation while claiming the mantle of progressive leadership on racial issues.¹⁵⁷

Upon his inauguration, Sanford called for a "New Day" in North Carolina through greater "understanding and good will," which African American community leaders

¹⁵⁷ By emphasizing the need for structural changes to the existing social system that ensured white economic and political hegemony, the efforts civil rights activists in North Carolina mirror historians Jacquelyn Dowd Hall and Nikhil Pal Singh's emphasis on the economic dimensions of the "Long Civil Rights Movement," in contrast to what Singh describes as a "universalist tenor to the Civil Rights Movement." See: Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal Of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233-1235; Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 18-19.

interpreted as a promise for cooperation. To Fred and Kelly M. Alexander of the state NAACP and John Wheeler of the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, Sanford's rhetoric appeared to provide a welcome change from that of his predecessor, Luther Hodges. For example, in a 1956 speech Hodges denounced the NAACP as a "private organization whose policies are determined in its national office in New York and are obviously designed to split North Carolina into racial camps... which... does not actually represent any substantial portion of our Negro citizens."¹⁵⁸ Sanford, by contrast, willingly met with and solicited the advice of the Alexander brothers and John Wheeler over meals at the Governor's Mansion during his first year in office.

The fact that Sanford frequently invited leaders of the African American community over to dine privately at the Governor's Mansion indicates that he valued their involvement for reasons of both pragmatism and principle. As a devout Methodist who emphasized the primacy of the "Golden Rule" to his view of Christian morality, Sanford believed these meetings would help the state maintain an atmosphere of racial harmony and good will during tumultuous times.¹⁵⁹ As the governor stated in response to praise from a Presbyterian minister in Anderson, South Carolina, "I have believed that the ultimate solution to the difficult question of race relations in the South, the Nation, and around the world must come from the Biblical injunction 'to love thy neighbor as thy self.'"¹⁶⁰ Moreover, Sanford favored

¹⁵⁸ James W. Patton, ed., "On Operating the Schools Through Private Corporations, July 14, 1955," *Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers of Luther Hartwell Hodges*, Vol. 2 (Raleigh: Council of State, 1962), 561.

¹⁵⁹ For a broader discussion of white Methodists' responses to the Civil Rights Movement, see Peter C. Murray, *Methodists and the Crucible of Race, 1930-1975* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004).

¹⁶⁰ Terry Sanford to Ralph L. Buchanan, October 8, 1962, Box 232, Folder "Segregation: B," Governor Terry

deliberation with black civil rights leaders as a means of forcing them to express their grievances in the Governor's Mansion rather than in the streets, restaurants, and courthouses of the state. These ideals of social harmony and respectable deliberation formed the core of Sanford's view of democracy and his performance of appropriate white manhood.

Rather than dismiss Sanford's overtures as co-optation, black leaders in North Carolina effectively utilized direct action in tandem with deliberation to leverage their claims to equal citizenship and manhood. These tactics formed a crucial thrust of both the Freedom Highways campaign and the longer Civil Rights struggle in North Carolina. In meetings with the Governor during 1961, the North Carolina Council on Human Relations (NCCHR), the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, and the state chapter of the NAACP all pressed Sanford to take proactive steps on two key issues. First, they wanted the governor to create a biracial committee to resolve racial issues at the local level, namely the integration of public schools. Second, they proposed that Sanford work for an end to racial discrimination in the employment practices of the state government.¹⁶¹ Following a conversation with the Governor in October 1961, NAACP President Kelly Alexander brazenly rejected Sanford's liberal belief "that the economic condition of the Negro cannot be improved, changed or alleviated except by education and persuasion." Moreover, NAACP leaders framed their appeal to Sanford within the context of national unity and Cold War anxieties by arguing, "should there be a total war, our manpower resources must be expanded and this country will

Sanford Papers.

¹⁶¹ Durham Committee on Negro Affairs to Governor Terry Sanford, April 29, 1961, Box 111, Folder "Segregation, General," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

need the maximum use of all qualified citizens.”¹⁶² Alexander’s emphasis on work, patriotism, and citizenship recalled the long history of African American service during wars and appealed to Sanford’s status as a World War II veteran. By portraying equal opportunities for employment and economic advancement as consistent with both the principles and defense of American democracy, black leaders not only sought to deflect accusations of Communist influence, but also to reaffirm their own claims to manhood and national citizenship.

In its first meeting with the governor in 1961, the NCCHR Executive Committee cautioned Sanford “there is among Negro leaders, including the most responsible leadership, a determination that their people shall have the rights of full citizenship in fact as well as promise.” Moreover, the NCCHR called on Sanford “to appoint a commission composed of equal members of Negroes and white persons for the purpose of making a quick study of factors and conditions surrounding several communities in our State,” in regard to issues of racial justice and desegregation.¹⁶³ However, Sanford refused to take up these proposals.

¹⁶² Kelly M. Alexander, “Equality of Opportunity in State Government Employment, and a Request for Qualified Negroes to be Employed in State Governmental Agencies and Departments on an Equal Basis with Other Citizens,” Box 111, Folder “Segregation, General,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers; On the broader importance of the geopolitics of the Cold War, anti-Communism, and nationalist movements to all sides of the Civil Rights Movement, see Mary L Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹⁶³ The Officers of the Executive Committee of NCCHR consisted of two white members in its director, Jones, Ruark, along with two black members in John Wheeler and Dr. C.E. Boulware, a Mathematics Professor at North Carolina College in Durham. Also it should be noted that men consistently occupied the officer positions in the late 1950s and early 1960s, at least three women, along with seventeen other men, served on the NCCHR’s Executive Committee at this time. Executive Committee of the North Carolina Council on Human Relations, “Notes for Governor Sanford,” Box 111, Folder: “Segregation, General,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

In his report to NCCHR director Harry S. Jones, Henry G. Ruark, an Executive Committee Member and white Methodist minister, claimed Sanford's inaction resulted from a lack of political will. He noted that the governor wanted to address both employment discrimination and the formation of biracial committees, but feared that such efforts might "alienate support" for his bill to boost funding for public education and engender an electoral backlash that could lead to the election of a more militant segregationist in 1964.¹⁶⁴ For Sanford, the greatest threat to amicable race relations in North Carolina came from those who invoked traditional white masculinity to prevent racial integration on the grounds that it would lead to miscegenation. Segregationists had long secured political dominance by claiming it was white men's duty, as heads of households, to protect white women.¹⁶⁵ Yet, according to Ruark, Sanford believed "he must try to safeguard the state from this."¹⁶⁶ Eschewing this version of white manhood and its priorities, which legitimated racial violence for too long, Sanford chose to adopt the role of defender of the state's progressive reputation. Keeping one eye on the need to attract outside economic investment, Sanford attempted to shift the terms of the debate and, in turn, modeled a new, more expansive white manhood that reconfigured traditional paternalism. In this version, white men still held responsibilities as heads of households. Rather than shield their wives from the possibility of interracial sex,

¹⁶⁴ Henry G. Ruark to Harry S. Jones, February 28, 1961, Folder 647: "North Carolina: Governor," North Carolina Council on Human Relations Papers, Collection # 04880, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [Collection hereafter cited as NCCHR Papers].

¹⁶⁵ Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Mind That Burns in Each Body: Women, Rape, and Racial Violence," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, edited by Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983): 328-49.

¹⁶⁶ Henry G. Ruark to Harry S. Jones, February 28, 1961, Folder 647: "North Carolina: Governor," NCCHR Papers.

however, Sanford, as the head of state, offered protection of North Carolina's economic health and lack of racial tension, which he saw as ultimately more beneficial for their families.

Lest he be accused of failing to defend citizens from turmoil in the streets, Sanford also utilized his executive influence to uphold law and order by emphasizing that the spirit of North Carolina's moderation demanded that the governor, and not grassroots activists on either side of the color line, determine the pace of social change. Such a stance reinforced white men's paternalist prerogatives, which included the right to decide what actions to take and when. Prior to the Freedom Highways campaign of 1962, Sanford consistently refused to intervene directly in local civil rights struggles. Even so, his willingness to meet with black male leaders and potentially negotiate the demands of civil rights activists signaled to them that he could become a powerful ally. In exchange, Sanford expected these middle-class, black men, such as Kelly and Fred Alexander, to act as intermediaries to restore racial calm in the state's hotspots.

Among these in 1961 was the town of Monroe in Union County, near the city of Charlotte. There, Robert F. Williams, head of the local NAACP chapter, viewed white liberal politicians as complicit in maintaining "the social jungle called Dixie." Robert Williams gained notoriety when he transformed the 1959 "Kissing Case" from a local incident into an international cause. The incident involved the arrest of two black boys, David Ezell "Fuzzy" Simpson and Hanover Thompson, who had played a kissing game with three white girls. Breaking this fundamental taboo, Simpson and Thompson eventually received sentences of

“indeterminate terms” in a state reform school specifically for African Americans.¹⁶⁷ Despite the threat of white violence and little support from state or national NAACP leadership, Williams became what historian Timothy Tyson describes as “a determined one-man press office for the cause of freeing the Monroe boys.” Additionally, Williams’ willingness to defend the black community of Monroe against such injustices and the threat of violence helped bring national and world opinion to pressure Governor Hodges to release the two boys.¹⁶⁸

Williams and the Monroe NAACP used both non-violent direct action and armed self-defense to insist that the dignity and rights they held as men and citizens could not be denied. This claim to black manhood drew sharp differences between the local NAACP chapter in Monroe and that of the state and national organization. The more middle-class NAACP leadership viewed non-violence as a way of life, more than just a tactic, and as a crucial step in bringing about change through political negotiation and legislation. For these leaders, any endorsement of self-defense or violence could erode the political leverage they carried with white politicians. As Williams defended his position against the national NAACP leadership, “we as men should stand up as men and protect our women and children... I am a man and I will walk upright as a man should.”¹⁶⁹ In Williams’ view, black activists needed to destabilize white segregationists’ rhetoric about protecting white womanhood through self-defense and protests against violence that threatened their own women and children.

¹⁶⁷ Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 90-101.

¹⁶⁸ Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 104-136.

¹⁶⁹ Robert F. Williams, qtd. in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 164.

Williams' message of masculine "armed self-reliance" also fed widespread perceptions of his Communist sympathies, which contributed to the hostility of both local law enforcement and citizens. As constituent Marguerite S. Hale angrily questioned Sanford, "How does anyone manage to have any respect for the type of Governor you represent to the Public? How can you allow this spread of Communism without lifting your finger to try to stop it, or perhaps you are a member of the NAACP also."¹⁷⁰ Hale's letter reflected common assertions among militant segregationists that Sanford's duties as a man and as a white Southerner compelled him to defend the state from such lawlessness. Given that he viewed both black activists like Williams and arch-segregationists like Hale as dangerous, Sanford refused to intervene directly. Instead, the governor called upon his friend John R. Larkins, an accommodationist and African American consultant to the State Board of Public Welfare, to meet with Williams and discuss ways to avoid violence. Out of this meeting, Larkins reported that Williams' troubles resulted from his own provocation.¹⁷¹

When the SNCC Freedom Riders arrived in Monroe in the summer of 1961, racial tensions reached their boiling point. White reprisals, such as rock-throwing, beatings, and men brandishing guns, increased in response to the influx of black and white activists, "outside agitators," who joined local protestors.¹⁷² The accusation that Williams kidnapped

¹⁷⁰ Marguerite S. Hale to Terry Sanford, July 20, 1961, Box 111, Folder "Segregation, H-I," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

¹⁷¹ Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 258-259.

¹⁷² Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 268-271.

and held a white couple hostage in his home led to his flight from Monroe to Cuba in August.¹⁷³

This dramatic set of events in Monroe reinforced Sanford's belief that the inherent pragmatism and Christian good will of white businessmen and community leaders across North Carolina could best preserve law and order. A letter from local industrialist A.S. Park demonstrated the effectiveness of his approach: "Our future endeavors for industrial growth for Union County... will continue in untiring efforts, that one day soon, we will find ample employment for most of our good people- white and colored."¹⁷⁴ Meanwhile, Sanford commended Mayor Fred M. Wilson for upholding the "North Carolina Way" in handling racial demonstrations. As he told Wilson, "you have demonstrated to the rest of the Nation that we are able to uphold the law in North Carolina and that in our State we will meet difficult problems with cool heads and in a spirit of good will."¹⁷⁵ Although Robert Williams could be dismissed, in Sanford's words, as a "mentally disturbed" radical who did not represent the mainstream civil rights leadership, the governor also kept his response to direct action campaigns focused on maintaining law and order above all other considerations.¹⁷⁶ This strategy allowed Sanford to fashion a firm, masculine response to black activists but stopped short of embracing massive resistance, which also generated frequent chaos in the streets. From the perspective of the governor and other white moderates, law and order would

¹⁷³ Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 248-286.

¹⁷⁴ A.S. Park to Gov. Terry Sanford, September 15, 1961, Box 112: Folder "Segregation: N-Q," Governor Terry Sanford Papers; Gov. Terry Sanford to Dr. S.C. Duncan (President of the Union County Chamber of Commerce), Box 111, Folder "Segregation: D," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

¹⁷⁵ Terry Sanford to Fred M. Wilson, September 18, 1961, Box 111, Folder "Segregation: W-Z," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

¹⁷⁶ Terry Sanford to William Pompey, January 5, 1962, Box 232, Folder "Segregation MC-Q," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

ensure that economic development and a relative absence of racial strife reinforced one another and set North Carolina apart from other Southern states.

Sanford found his approach affirmed in the February 1962 issue of *National Geographic*. There, journalist Malcolm Ross echoed V.O. Key by describing North Carolina as the “Dixie Dynamo,” noting, “there is something inspiring about the State at this point in the twentieth century, something exciting, dynamic and somehow youthful.”¹⁷⁷ For Sanford and the state’s moderate white leadership, this identity provided a powerful rhetorical tool. They would wield it to both co-opt civil rights leaders and to refute arch-segregationist accusations that moderation represented an ill-fated, passive, and therefore implicitly feminized, strategy.

The pride white moderates took in the “Dixie Dynamo” image portrayed to a national audience helped catalyze direct action campaigns designed to pressure white leaders to live up to this reputation. As early as 1959, CORE Field Director Gordon Carey commented, “it is in areas such as North Carolina where we can legitimately expect the greatest rate of progress and where traditional CORE techniques are most applicable.”¹⁷⁸ Sanford could have led the way for local white leaders across the state, but his reluctance to respond to even cautious civil rights leaders’ demands signaled that they, too, could deploy delay tactics in dealing with black activists. Even before the national CORE office launched the Freedom Highways campaign in summer 1962, local African Americans organized and pressured city officials to recognize and act upon their demands. In response, white officials in cities such

¹⁷⁷ Malcolm Ross, “North Carolina: Dixie Dynamo,” *National Geographic*, Vol. 121, no. 2 (February 1962): 141-183.

¹⁷⁸ Gordon Carey, qtd. in Meier and Rudwick, *CORE*, 97-98.

as Durham established “goodwill” advisory committees to study the problem and offer pragmatic solutions. Thus, white moderates at the local level reflected the governor’s preference for gradualism, education, and law and order as a more masculine, but still moderate, strategy for ensuring amicable race relations.

In the cities of the North Carolina Piedmont, where African Americans voted in larger numbers, leaders of local CORE and NAACP chapters relied primarily on negotiation with city officials before moving to direct action if their desired results did not materialize.¹⁷⁹ As CORE Field Secretary Reverend Ben Elton Cox Sr. described the organization’s strategy: “the first thing was to hit cities where there was a large black population, where there was a liberal white clientele also, and make a little progress there and get a foothold. Then you move out to the smaller towns.”¹⁸⁰ Durham provides a case in point. As early as 1956, the city’s NAACP Youth Council, in cooperation with the Economic Committee of the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, began to monitor and keep a written record of those segregated stores that black patrons visited the most. The results of this survey allowed civil rights leaders to determine which establishments would serve as “the main targets for securing employment.” City officials responded by forming a biracial committee to study the situation and make recommendations, thereby slowing down the pace of change. Despite modest gains in securing thirty-eight sales positions at downtown stores for black applicants, the NAACP

¹⁷⁹ James Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Arbor House, 1985), 93-94.

¹⁸⁰ Rev. Ben Elton Cox Sr., interview with Eugene E. Pfaff, May 15, 1982, GreensboroVOICES Collection.

Youth Council made equal employment opportunity and desegregating movie theaters throughout the city its top priorities for 1961 and 1962.¹⁸¹

When black and white youth activists targeted the city-owned Carolina Theater with protests and boycotts over the latter months of 1961, city officials responded to their demands. Members of the Mayor's Human Relations Committee attempted to diffuse the situation by promising the NAACP Youth Council that it would negotiate with theater management. When that failed, the Youth Council presented a petition to the City Council in November. Still nothing changed.¹⁸² In February 1962, NAACP Youth Council President John Edwards wrote to Paul Hardin of the Mayor's Committee asserting, "we would always prefer to solve our community's problems by negotiation rather than by petition, picketing or court action. We have always resorted to these other means only when attempts to negotiate have been rebuffed."¹⁸³ A group of white students from nearby Duke University, who also participated in the protests, defended the picketing of the Carolina Theater as a "realistic" attack against the city's complicity in defending "all forms of segregation."¹⁸⁴ Frustrated at the delay, Durham's black leadership continued organizing the community with an eye not only toward achieving integration in public accommodations, but also to leverage black voting power in the upcoming midterm elections that November.

¹⁸¹ Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, "Report: What Makes Durham Tick?" Folder 7187: "Speeches and Writings, 1961-1962," Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

¹⁸² The Durham Mayor's Human Relations Committee formed in 1957 in response to the sit-ins led by Reverend Douglas Moore and six black youth at Durham's Royal Ice Cream parlor. Despite its biracial composition, it lacked any official power and to many black activists represented another delay tactic employed by city officials. See Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 55, 72, 77-78.

¹⁸³ John Edwards to Paul Hardin, February 4, 1962, Folder 6879: "Chapters: Durham, N.C., Correspondence, 1962-1966, and undated," Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

¹⁸⁴ "Non-Violent Realism," *Duke University Chronicle*, Reprinted in the *Carolina Times*, February 10, 1962.

In the run-up to these 1962 elections, Sanford and his white moderate allies grew concerned over the prospect that black activists might switch their allegiances to support the Republican Party. African American John R. Larkins, consultant to the State Board of Public Welfare, brought an editorial from Louis Austin, editor of Durham's black newspaper the *Carolina Times*, to the attention of Sanford aides that criticized the pace of racial change.¹⁸⁵ As Larkins warned Sanford's legal aide Joel Fleishman, "Louis... wields considerable influence among the Negroes of the state. It has been called to my attention from several reliable resources that there is considerable activity among the Republicans to influence Negro votes in 1962 and 1964." Moreover, Larkins asked Fleishman to pass the information along to Sanford and Bert Bennett, chairman of the State Democratic Party, in order that "the urgency of the situation should be impressed upon both of them."¹⁸⁶ Clearly, Austin and other civil rights leaders recognized that an election year held greater potential to extract more concessions from Sanford and other white moderate politicians.

In recognition of this potential leverage, the State Conference of NAACP Branches laid out a plan that revolved around economic and citizenship rights at a meeting in late January 1962. As Gloster B. Current, director of branches for the NAACP, urged the delegation, "We in the NAACP have decided that we are going to fight everything that is discriminatory... You must get out and raise hell everyday in an effort to get your rights. We

¹⁸⁵ Louis Austin, "Editorial: A Look at the Old and New Year," *Carolina Times*, January 20, 1962.

¹⁸⁶ John R. Larkins memo to Joel Fleishman, January 23, 1962, Box 232, Folder "Segregation, General," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

want Negroes working everywhere we are spending money.”¹⁸⁷ By linking consumer spending to securing equal employment opportunities, the state NAACP also staked its claim to citizenship in the economics terms of a consumer’s republic. Alongside critical discussions of token school integration in North Carolina, the *Carolina Times* reported that national NAACP Labor Secretary Herbert Hill encouraged local activists to “courageously challenge city, county and state employment agencies to stop long-existing discriminatory hiring policies by flooding the offices with qualified applicants even to the point of legal action.” Lastly, the theme of the state conference challenged the NAACP’s mostly male membership by claiming, “If Your Name is Not in the Book, or You Don't Vote on Election Day, You're a Man Without a Country.”¹⁸⁸ With the support of national civil rights organizations, black activists in North Carolina took up this call to agitate the state’s white elite by asserting their claims to citizenship and manhood primarily through voter registration drives. Through these efforts, African American men, in particular, countered long-standing segregationist arguments that their supposedly rapacious nature could not be trusted with the responsibilities of voting and political leadership.

In February 1962, Louis Austin wrote, “the time is ripe in North Carolina for the launching of a mammoth, state-wide register and vote campaign,” and that black North Carolinians could boost their collective voting power from 200,000 to 350,000 voters by

¹⁸⁷ “Raise Hell to Get Your Rights, NAACP Leader Tells Youth at State-wide Gathering in Charlotte,” *Carolina Times*, February 3, 1962.

¹⁸⁸ “Raise Hell to Get Your Rights, NAACP Leader Tells Youth at State-wide Gathering in Charlotte,” *Carolina Times*, February 3, 1962.

November.¹⁸⁹ A month later, he upped the ante when he called on black voters to register and vote Republican. Austin decried the Sanford administration and Democratic Party leadership for not recognizing that “the gubernatorial election of 1960 saw the Negro voters en masse, save the day for the Democratic Party in this state.” In return, Austin felt, much as the NAACP and Durham Committee expressed to Sanford in earlier meetings, that African Americans should have received “appointments to some of the many high-salaried jobs that have been handed out right and left.”¹⁹⁰

With African Americans already comprising around ten percent of the statewide electorate, local activists, with the support of national civil rights organizations, coordinated voter registration drives in the summer of 1962 to make Austin’s prediction a reality and thereby increase their political advantage.¹⁹¹ For example, the Southern Regional Council, with the support of organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee, provided civil rights groups in North Carolina with \$350,000 in funding to aid in voter registration efforts through the Voter Education Project. With the addition of extra field staff in North Carolina, Kelly Alexander confidently predicted, “we expect to add at least another 750,000 names to the rolls before the Presidential elections.”¹⁹²

However, such expectations often failed to materialize even in urban centers as evident by the efforts of SNCC’s voter registration drive in Wake County. In Raleigh, the

¹⁸⁹ “The Solution for Political Skulduggery,” *Carolina Times*, February 3, 1962.

¹⁹⁰ “Time for Negroes of N.C. to Change Their Party,” *Carolina Times*, March 3, 1962.

¹⁹¹ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*, 133-134.

¹⁹² T.R. Bassett, *The Worker*, “Fund Aid Spurs Negro Voters Registration Campaign in South,” April 8, 1962, Folder 142: “Clippings: 1940s-1970s, Civil Rights,” Wesley Critz George Papers, SHC. [Collection hereafter cited as W.C. George Papers].

combined efforts of SNCC activists and the local Raleigh Citizens Association only registered 1,203 African American voters out of an expected 10,000. Student leader Dorothy Dawson described the shortcomings as the result of fear or a failure on the part of many black North Carolinians to “see a connection between the ballot and the breadbox.”¹⁹³ As a result, African American leaders in urban areas consistently lobbied and pressured state and local officials for an end to employment discrimination in order to demonstrate that direct action could procure substantive, economic gains. Raleigh NAACP President Ralph Campbell assured local activists that despite concerns over low voter registration numbers “there will be some changes in the State Employment Security Commission very soon.”¹⁹⁴

By connecting the “ballot and the breadbox,” civil rights leaders undermined the belief of Sanford and other white politicians that gradually accommodating changes to the racial status quo could be achieved without any changes to the existing structure of white economic power. Despite the difficulties posed by white economic reprisals and black apathy, such voter registration efforts provided local civil rights leaders with greater leverage to press Governor Sanford for an end to employment discrimination while challenging his emphasis on gradualism and Christian morality. Despite Sanford’s private support for such measures, the issue of extending greater employment opportunities for black Carolinians remained problematic, especially in an election year. Just as Sanford had blamed his inaction on the NCCHR’s recommendations in February 1961 on the possibility of white backlash, the governor again expressed reluctance to endorse the issue in 1962. In response, white

¹⁹³ “Negro Vote Campaign Falls Short in City,” *News and Observer*, July 23, 1962.

¹⁹⁴ “Negro Vote Campaign Falls Short in City,” *News and Observer*, July 23, 1962.

minister Henry Ruark tried to convey to Sanford aide Tom Lambeth that if the state wanted “to make a real difference in the economic aspect of our racial progress,” then it “need[ed] to move ahead more quickly on this.”¹⁹⁵ However, a letter between two of Sanford’s close friends and aides, W. Lunsford Crew, an attorney from Roanoke Rapids, and Judge William Copeland, illustrated his administration’s fears. Crew informed Copeland “there are a lot of things going on in the race that I frankly do not think will work in the Governor’s best interest. I think that some of people involved are contemplating a coalition to block the Governor’s program and to sponsor certain ideas of their own.”¹⁹⁶ These comments not only underscore white moderates’ concerns about the mobilization of more massive resistance candidates, but just as importantly, they feared that these reactionaries would also undo Sanford’s efforts to improve and expand public education.

It was within this context that CORE officials launched the Freedom Highways campaign in July 1962 and returned the focus to the desegregation of public accommodations. Although CORE originally targeted Florida, CORE attorney Charles Oldham reported on June 30, 1962, “nearly all chain store owners contacted throughout the state have agreed to serve Negroes and interracial groups.”¹⁹⁷ CORE achieved the desegregation of restaurants in Florida primarily due to the work of a statewide biracial committee, much like the one that civil rights leaders in North Carolina pushed Sanford to

¹⁹⁵ Henry G. Ruark to Tom Lambeth, February 22, 1962, Folder 647: “North Carolina Governor,” NCCHR Papers.

¹⁹⁶ W. Lunsford Crew to Judge William Copeland, July 30, 1962, Folder 1296: “Political Correspondence, January-December, 1962,” Terry Sanford Papers (1946-1993), SHC.

¹⁹⁷ “State to be Target of CORE Drive,” *News and Observer*, July 1, 1962.

create during his first year in office.¹⁹⁸ Even without that, the Tarheel State held a strategic appeal as an alternate location. As CORE national Field Director Gordon Carey explained, the Gandhian emphasis on symbolism as a tool of non-violent protest led the campaign to target North Carolina, specifically Greensboro, as its base of operations ostensibly for its role as “the historical spawning ground for the national sit-in movement.”¹⁹⁹

CORE field staff led “sociodrama” training at Greensboro’s Bennett College in July 1962 to prepare activists for the physical and psychological violence associated with non-violent protest. In the meantime, leaders of the newly-formed Greensboro CORE chapter worked with national leaders to develop a plan to organize demonstrations at segregated motels, hotels, and restaurants, namely Howard Johnson, along “U.S. 29, 74, 1, and interstate highways.” Strategists also planned to send other groups “directly to cities” to work for the desegregation of schools, accommodations, and to end employment discrimination.²⁰⁰ As CORE leaders defined this strategy, “in the long run progress in the fields of employment and voter registration may be more basic than eating facilities. Yet, we cannot afford to overlook the necessity for some projects which speak to man’s dignity.”²⁰¹ Whereas local African American leaders valued the role of community networks in working for long-term, structural change, the national leadership involved in the Freedom Highways drive sought to mobilize activists for short-term, mostly symbolic gains that would build momentum for the

¹⁹⁸ James Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart*, 239-24; Meier and Rudwick, *CORE*, 170-171.

¹⁹⁹ Gordon Carey, interview with Eugene E. Pfaff, July 20, 1981, GreensboroVOICES Collection.

²⁰⁰ “Sociodrama Training Aid Used By CORE,” *News and Observer*, July 21, 1962; Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 112.

²⁰¹ Gordon Carey, Rudolph Lombard, Jim Peck, “Freedom Highways Movement Designed to Open Accommodations to Negroes, CORE Explains,” *Carolina Times*, July 28, 1962.

movement. Moreover, the vision of racial dignity advanced by the more middle-class CORE national leadership saw respectability for both black men and women, along with the right to integrated public accommodations as key components that would lead to economic gains and voting rights.

While CORE and NAACP activists prepared to launch this non-violent assault on the institution of segregation in North Carolina, the governor and his allies focused on promoting their vision of the state as the South's "Dixie Dynamo" in the areas of race relations and economic development. The most notable example of this strategy occurred in early July, during the National Governor's Conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania. While South Carolina Governor Ernest "Fritz" Hollings led a Southern filibuster against a symbolic resolution supporting the cause of civil rights protestors, introduced by New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Sanford excused himself from the proceedings. Instead, as newspaper reports detail, Sanford left "to speak to the local Rotary club, and meet with men of a textile firm interested in locating plants in NC." When asked about his absence from the conference Sanford expressed his disgust at "how certain governors who are presidential candidates waste the time of the conference to no good purpose."²⁰² Sanford's decision at the governor's conference underscored the importance of portraying an image of North Carolina as a unique Southern state with stable race relations and civil, rational political leadership that promoted economic development above massive resistance.²⁰³

²⁰² Roy Parker Jr., "Sanford Says Conference Wastes Time," *News and Observer*, July 4, 1962.

²⁰³ On industrialization and economic development policies in the twentieth century Sunbelt, see Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sun Belt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the*

Even prior to the official start of the Freedom Highways campaign, embittered opposition emerged to characterize CORE's involvement as an example of unwarranted outside intervention and Communist influences seeking to gain a foothold in the solid South. However, this arch-segregationist opposition not only denounced black direct action, but also viewed the mid-term elections as an opportunity to defeat white moderates both in the General Assembly in 1962 and in the gubernatorial election of 1964. As Gordon Carey recalled, the effective organization of civil rights demonstrations mobilized a strong segregationist response by conjuring up "the idea of an assault" on the segregated institutions of North Carolina.²⁰⁴ Indeed, for arch-segregationists, the use of non-violent direct action not only threatened segregation, but could also be used to exacerbate white anxiety that associated integration and black political power with intermarriage. Moreover, linking the sponsorship of a national organization like CORE to outside interference, most likely one with Communist ties they could characterize the Freedom Highways campaign as subversive and un-American.

Arch-segregationist groups such as the Patriots of North Carolina and the North Carolina Defenders of States' Rights effectively magnified their influence by invoking traditional, white supremacist rhetoric opposing intermarriage. Although, they also relied on more novel arguments that utilized the language of individual rights.²⁰⁵ For example, Dr.

South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

²⁰⁴ Gordon Carey, interview with Eugene E. Pfaff, July 20, 1981, Greensboro VOICES Collection.

²⁰⁵ In regard to the connections between the "rights-based" language of modern conservatism and racial politics, see Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*; Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making*

Wesley Critz George, a professor at the University of North Carolina and founder of the Patriots, argued in defense of a biologically-determined racial hierarchy. In a speech at Greensboro College in 1962, George charged, “Integrationists propose to solve [the race problem] by mixing the races in all the relations of their lives and so bringing about in time a single mixed race.”²⁰⁶ Calls for white men to defend their homes and their state from the threat of interracial sexual contact had long formed a consistent part of arch-segregationist rhetoric.²⁰⁷ Similarly, in 1962, Defenders’ president Reverend James P. Dees sent a letter to school and community leaders across the state asking for their support in defeating the “forced race mixing” goals that would result from black direct action. Dees concluded with an ominous warning: “the day may come when white children will tell their parents ‘You betrayed us by sending us to integrated schools. You delivered us to the Black Death’ ... A God fearing man will stand up and fight for his children and family.”²⁰⁸

Of course, the governor also received letters that parroted the same rhetoric. As one anonymous Raleigh resident asserted, “we don't want Raleigh made into another Washington [D.C.] where it is unsafe for women and children to go out after dark; our wives and children can still go to downtown theatres here without negro thugs... being allowed to enter and

of Modern Conservatism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); William A. Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2008), 63, 73-80.

²⁰⁶ Wesley Critz George, “Speech at Greensboro College,” Folder 99: “Writings by George, Civil Rights,” W.C. George Papers.

²⁰⁷ Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Mind That Burns in Each Body: Women, Rape, and Racial Violence,” 328-49.

²⁰⁸ NC Defenders of States’ Rights memo, August 21, 1962, Folder 63: “August-September 1962,” W.C. George Papers.

revert to their native natural savagery.”²⁰⁹ Although the Freedom Highways movement included African American men and women, arch-segregationists narrowed the rhetorical field considerably. Omitting black women, and their protection altogether, they charged that black men’s actions constituted a dangerous blurring of the accepted boundaries of public space. It would also undermine their identities as honorable white men. Therefore, they insisted on a more forceful response. In sum, white men’s vowing to protect their wives and daughters challenged Sanford’s manhood by associating white moderation with support for black men’s criminality that would lead to miscegenation.

Like white moderates and liberals, arch-segregationists relied on mediums such as television and newspaper editorial columns to advance their arguments. For example, in this era future U.S. Senator Jesse A. Helms used his position at Raleigh’s WRAL television station to broadcast daily *Viewpoint* editorials lambasting government overreach, secularism, and Communist threats at home and abroad. When it came to civil rights, Helms argued that black Southerners should not achieve legal equality without first embracing “personal decency and personal responsibility” throughout the United States. In denouncing protests and demonstrations, Helms argued, “no appreciable improvement in tense race relations can be expected” when in cities such as Washington D.C., “one Congressional secretary was attacked and stabbed by a Negro nine times while kneeling to pray in a church adjacent to the Capitol.”²¹⁰ Ultimately, Helms and his allies portrayed black demands for equality as merely a front that concealed the ultimate goals of race-mixing, lawlessness, and political

²⁰⁹ “An Enraged White Protestant Presbyterian Citizen” to Terry Sanford, November 17, 1962, Box 232, Folder “Segregation: General,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²¹⁰ Jesse A. Helms, *Viewpoint* #424, August 11, 1962, NCC.

domination. In doing so, arch-segregationists in North Carolina attempted to create a political climate where cooperation with black activists represented a failure of white manhood.

However, the Freedom Highways campaign mobilized direct action protests to force white moderate politicians at the state and local levels to take greater political risks to support racial equality and thereby uphold perceptions of the state's exceptionalism. When black activists encountered fierce opposition from white business owners and community officials, local black leaders worked with CORE staff to expand and escalate their operations. In doing so, they aimed to prompt Sanford to intervene in community affairs. For example, in the early stages of the campaign, CORE staff appealed to Sanford and business leaders to negotiate for the desegregation of Howard Johnson restaurants and Holiday Inn hotels across the state. Activists knew that these national chains represented better targets than locally owned hotels and motels, but they also constituted an important first step, at least symbolically. Throughout the summer of 1962, CORE Field Secretary Rev. Ben Elton Cox wrote to Sanford and managers of segregated restaurants declaring, "we make this request to your American, Christian, moral and Democratic self that you stop refusing to serve Negroes across the state of North Carolina. Such is not in good taste with our progressive state in step with the American Dream, liberty and justice for all."²¹¹ Moreover, in another leaflet describing the campaign's efforts, Cox wrote, "Negroes are refused service at many Howard Johnson's in North Carolina. Such practices are morally unjust and out of step with the Golden rule. Moreover, CORE does not believe that segregated facilities on major U.S.

²¹¹ Rev. Ben Elton Cox Sr. to Terry Sanford, June 1, 1962, Box 232, Folder "Segregation: C," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

highways are in the best interest of *all* citizens, especially in our progressive state and leading nation.”²¹²

When Cox’s attempts at moral persuasion did not elicit any response, CORE, along with local NAACP chapters, initiated sit-ins at Hot Shoppes and Howard Johnson restaurants in Charlotte and Greensboro. In both cities, white managers responded by closing stores and having police arrest groups of protesters for trespassing, while both local and state officials refused to involve themselves in the affairs of private businesses or the courts.²¹³ Despite the jailing of numerous CORE activists in Charlotte, NAACP leader Reginald A. Hawkins asserted, “I’m quite sure these students will not be deterred by today’s decision, they are willing to go to jail and perhaps even die in order to realize the great American dream.”²¹⁴ The dogged determination of civil rights activists in North Carolina to put their bodies on the line consistently by entering white spaces further aroused segregationist fears about black lawlessness while simultaneously raising the stakes for white liberals to intervene and recognize their grievances as legitimate. Moreover, the connections they drew between the dignity of non-violent, civil disobedience and citizenship challenged Sanford’s law and order approach to civil rights.

As the efforts of the Freedom Highways campaign stalled in Greensboro and Charlotte, CORE and NAACP activists in Durham and Raleigh built upon the works of local

²¹² Rev. Ben Elton Cox Sr. to Terry Sanford, July 10, 1962, Box 232, Folder “Segregation: C,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers [emphasis in original].

²¹³ “Negro Group is Rebuffed at Greensboro Restaurant,” *News and Observer*, July 25, 1962; and Dwayne Walls, “CORE Trio Leaves Court For Restaurant,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 9, 1962.

²¹⁴ Dwayne Walls, “4 Guilty of Trespassing in 1st of Demonstrator Trials,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 23, 1962.

organizers. In Durham, CORE leaders targeted businesses the NAACP Youth Council had identified months earlier as serving substantial numbers of black patrons despite refusing to hire black employees or to integrate their facilities.²¹⁵ Many of Durham's black youth, led by North Carolina College student Guyanna Horton, attempted to negotiate with Howard Johnson's management, and picketed Eckerd Drug Store for its refusal to employ black sales staff. Meanwhile black parents organized over ninety-nine transfer applications for their children to attend previously all-white schools.²¹⁶ When negotiations failed, demonstrators employed sit-ins at the Howard Johnson restaurant. Gordon Carey recalled that these protests resulted in the arrest of "Waldo Mead, a white ministerial student; Jocelyn McKissick, daughter of our Durham attorney, Guyanna Horton and Jon Schaeffer... Schaeffer had to serve his term on the road gang."²¹⁷ These arrests further mobilized the black community in Durham and throughout the state.

Instead of addressing the concerns of African American activists, Sanford used a public relations campaign that aimed to persuade black voters that his administration promoted equal employment opportunity. Yet, the plan backfired. As the *Carolina Times* reported, "a statement... prepared by the Personnel division and given to Governor Sanford by Personnel director Walter Fuller, purported to show that Negroes were not being discriminated against by the state in employment." John Wheeler then summarized the reaction of black leaders across the state: "I am convinced that the statement made by Fuller

²¹⁵ Rev. Ben Elton Cox Sr., Interview by Eugene Pfaff, May 15, 1982, Greensboro VOICES Collection.

²¹⁶ "Request to Open Restaurant to Negroes Rejected By Business," *Carolina Times*, July 28, 1962; Sergeant David T. Young to Terry Sanford, State Highway Patrol Report, August 7, 1962, Box 232, Folder "Segregation, L," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²¹⁷ Gordon Carey, "Freedom Highways," *CORE-lator*, No. 97 (September 1962), NCC.

is misleading. It is obviously designed to create a misleading impression. Our state can't make progress if we are going to permit this sort of thing to be done."²¹⁸ This calculated response focused negative attention on the governor's ill-conceived public relations attempt. However, the fact that black leaders called administration officials out publicly represented a risky strategy. Beyond alienating their most important ally, it might actually strengthen the hand of arch-segregationists who pressured Sanford from the opposite direction.

After a mass meeting at Durham's St. Joseph's AME Church on August 12, 1962, NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins, Rev. Ben Elton Cox, and James Farmer led a march of over 1,000 black and white activists into downtown Durham to protest the arrests.²¹⁹ As Farmer boldly told to the crowd, "we're going to wipe out Jim Crow... we're going to join Albany [Georgia] and we're joining the most exciting battle of democracy."²²⁰ This comparison to the Albany movement served as a direct challenge to white liberals and arch-segregationists in North Carolina. SNCC and SCLC led a year-long movement in Albany that attracted national press attention over the struggles between the police force of white Sheriff Laurie Pritchett, African American activists, and local Klan chapters, as well as the tension between non-violence and open rebellion in the black community.²²¹ Although Sanford refused to negotiate with protesters or serve as a mediator, the threat of North Carolina's joining Albany as a prominent site of extended civil rights struggle threatened the state's reputation for racial harmony. Moreover, the governor found himself caught between

²¹⁸ "‘Misleading,’ Say Leaders of Sanford Claim," *Carolina Times*, August 11, 1962.

²¹⁹ Gordon Carey, "Freedom Highways," *CORE-lator*, No. 97 (September 1962), NCC.

²²⁰ "In Race Struggle Durham Discovers ‘New Unity,’" *Carolina Times*, August 18, 1962.

²²¹ David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, 129-132.

non-intervention, which could make him appear weak and emasculated, and playing an active, heavy-handed role in maintaining social order at the risk of alienating one or both sides.

In response to this series of arrests combined with the intransigence of the white community in Durham, CORE expanded its operation to Raleigh, Hickory, High Point, and Salisbury where local black leaders had previously challenged segregation in a variety of public spaces. James Farmer drew on the state's image as he announced, "North Carolina has not completely lived up to its reputation as a liberal Southern state as these arrests indicate... We just want to help North Carolina live up to this reputation."²²² Yet, the expansion and escalation of the Freedom Highways campaign in other cities across North Carolina further antagonized arch-segregationists and raised the political stakes for Sanford to intervene in local affairs. In response to the mass demonstrations and the presence of national leadership in Durham, over three hundred black and white activists protested in front of the Howard Johnson restaurant in nearby Raleigh, where restaurant employees doused the crowd with fire hoses.²²³ CORE responded by increasing the pressure, dispatching field staff to support local protest movements in "Statesville, Hickory, Charlotte, High Point and Asheville."²²⁴ What they did not calculate, however, was the degree to which efforts in smaller cities such as Statesville and Hickory intensified white backlash. Sanford, on the other hand, could foresee this outcome.

²²² Bill McAllister, "Step-Up In Integration Drive Set for 3 Cities," *News and Observer*, August 12, 1962.

²²³ Gordon Carey, "Freedom Highways," *CORE-lator*, No. 97 (September 1962), NCC.

²²⁴ Bill McAllister, "3 Negroes Arrested at Restaurant Here," *News and Observer*, August 14, 1962.

Regardless, events in these areas amplified the statewide nature of black discontent with white politicians. The local black freedom movement in Statesville emerged after a young man, identified by the local white paper, the *Record and Landmark*, only as a “Nigerian Negro student,” attempted to integrate a restaurant inside a bus station. The paper praised the local police and the courts for maintaining order by saying “when the Nigerian ran afoul of the law down in Iredell [County], he was treated just as everyone else is treated.”²²⁵ The paper’s attempt to portray Statesville justice as fair, and thereby underscore North Carolina’s exceptionalism, did little to dampen activists’ zeal. Soon, local black Baptist minister Rev. Wilson Lee organized demonstrations at the local Howard Johnson restaurant. When over three hundred protestors marched downtown, local police arrested twenty-one members of the group, including Rev. Cox of CORE, Reginald Hawkins, and local NAACP president T.V. Mangum.

This time, Statesville police responded in a more aggressive fashion. In the midst of the chaos, Gordon Carey reported, “police brutally beat 15-year-old Patricia Long. The arresting officer later claimed she had ‘assaulted’ him. A 20-year-old Negro boy was beaten on the face with a billie-stick [*sic.*] and manhandled. He was charged with resisting arrest.” After further reports of white violence and a lack of police protection for demonstrators emerged in nearby Hickory, state officials and law enforcement grew concerned over these explosive situations.²²⁶ However, Iredell County Sheriff Charlie Rumble told State Highway Patrol officials that “he [Rumble] did not anticipate any serious racial difficulty as a result of

²²⁵ “It’s Hell ‘Down in Iredell,’” *Carolina Times*, July 28, 1962.

²²⁶ Gordon Carey, “Statesville: City of Progress,” *CORE-lator*, No. 97 (September 1962), NCC.

these demonstrations.”²²⁷ Apparently, Sheriff Rumble did not consider police brutality as indicative of “any serious difficulty.” In reality, the response of white law enforcement played into black leaders’ hands. This violence allowed them the opportunity to show that North Carolina allowed systematic discrimination and police brutality just like its Southern neighbors.

The next day, Gordon Carey, Floyd McKissick, and James Farmer joined Rev. Lee and the Statesville protesters by leading a mass meeting and then marching on the city’s jail. When the crowd refused police calls to disperse, a jeep released a fog of insecticide on the group, eventually forcing their retreat to the church where the mass meeting occurred a few hours earlier.²²⁸ Just as James Farmer previously warned that Freedom Highways drive might produce the “next Albany,” after the Statesville incident he declared, “North Carolina may become the center of non-violent struggle if flagrant abuse of police power is permitted against Negroes seeking their constitutional rights.”²²⁹ News of white citizens and city leaders employing fire hoses and pesticides to subdue non-violent protests led to demands for Sanford to intervene lest he abdicate his masculine duties as the defender of the state’s progressive reputation. Additionally, with direct action showing no signs of ending and an FBI investigation into accusations of police brutality in Statesville, Sanford finally had to move and end the demonstrations across North Carolina.²³⁰

²²⁷ Col. David T. Lambert report to Terry Sanford, August 20, 1962, Box 232, Folder “Segregation, L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²²⁸ Gordon Carey, “Statesville: City of Progress,” *CORE-lator*, No. 97 (September 1962), NCC.

²²⁹ “Protests By Negroes To Keep Up,” *News and Observer*, August 21, 1962.

²³⁰ “FBI Probes Statesville Demonstrators’ Claims,” *News and Observer*, August 24, 1962.

Caught between the anxieties of arch-segregationists and the constant pressure of black activists, Sanford attempted to defend his own honor and that of the state he governed by proposing the formation of a statewide, biracial committee of “leading citizens” to address the grievances of black civil rights leaders. His plan reflected a bureaucratic, gradual approach to resolving racial issues that promised moderation and, more importantly, the absence of national attention. In a news conference announcing this agreement with civil rights leaders, Sanford exhorted that citizens of all races “should conduct themselves with patience and with understanding for the rights of others and the hopes of others. We are proud of the State’s reputation in human understanding and must protect it.”²³¹ This emphasis on “patience” indicated that Sanford and other white moderates’ conceived of law and order as calm, bureaucratic negotiation between elites of both race as opposed to direct action and white retaliation. Also, the governor’s statement reflected his masculine role as the defender of North Carolina’s positive image as he asserted that all citizens should exercise restraint and assume responsibility for promoting its well-being.

The vague implications of this statement for the progress of racial justice reflected the unclear timetable and limited aims of the committee. On October 2, Floyd McKissick wrote to Greensboro CORE leader Henry Thomas, lamenting the slow pace of desegregation at Howard Johnson facilities in Charlotte, Durham, and Statesville. Moreover, McKissick argued in favor of “a master assault on the remaining ten segregated Howard Johnson’s Restaurants in the State,” as he did not “feel that we should quit until the job has been

²³¹ Roy Parker Jr., “Sanford to Appoint Racial Study Group,” *News and Observer*, August 25, 1962.

accomplished.”²³² Three days later, Grady Davis, President of the Raleigh Citizens Association wrote to Sanford announcing, “the Raleigh Citizens Association has been deeply disappointed in your failure to appoint an interracial committee... to study the problem of discrimination in the Howard Johnson restaurants and other public eating establishments in the state.”²³³ Although the Governor’s Committee eventually procured desegregation of the majority of Howard Johnson restaurants in the state, civil rights leaders still deemed Sanford too cautious.

Likewise, arch-segregationists decried the tepid leadership of Sanford and other white politicians, albeit for profoundly different reasons. In their view, any cooperation with black leaders represented a misguided, weak, and unnecessary effort to concede to the demands of lawless “outside agitators.” Not long after Sanford’s announcement of the biracial committee, Bagwell Goode, a white woman from Statesville, wrote to him pointedly asking, “where sir, are the Militia the Power and Guns when the Negroes force their way into our Churches, into our Restaurants- when they come in groups to stir up and cause trouble?”²³⁴ For arch-segregationists in Statesville and other urban areas, negotiation represented a slippery-slope to social equality that could only be stopped with the full police powers of the state. Another constituent, Louis F. Lawler of Raleigh, wrote to Sanford aide Tom Lambeth arguing, “the governor does, indeed, place himself on the side of integration. Segregation is a

²³² Floyd B. McKissick to Henry Thomas, October 2, 1962, Folder 6763: “Correspondence, 1961-1982,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

²³³ Grady Davis telegram to Terry Sanford, October 5, 1962, Box 232, Folder “Segregation D-G,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²³⁴ Bagwell Goode to Terry Sanford, October 1, 1962, Box 232, Folder “Segregation: D-G,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

fact here and ... we need no committees, no meetings, no bi-racial studies to achieve what we already have....the only way to resolve this difference to suit... the negro is to adopt wholesale racial mixing.”²³⁵ Rev. James Dees of the N.C. Defenders of States’ Rights sharply questioned Sanford’s attempt “to try to induce the owners of Howard Johnson restaurants to submit to the integration demands of these CORE agitators, trespassors [*sic.*], and disturbers of the peace?”²³⁶ Sanford responded to the reverend by pointedly declaring, “I am not using my office to do anything except to urge people to act as Jesus Christ taught us to act in dealing with one another.”²³⁷ Although such a response distinguished Sanford from other Southern governors, it also revealed his preference for moral suasion over the force of law or concrete action in the resolution of racial issues. To be fair, Sanford knew the General Assembly would not dismantle segregation unless forced by the federal government to do so. But he also did little to rein in overzealous and abusive white lawmen, maintaining his faith in local solutions to local issues, which would have deprived black activists of the gripping headlines that furthered their cause. Indeed, Sanford’s rhetoric consistently defended North Carolina’s reputation for orderly, realistic response to the tumultuous events generated by civil rights protests.

As the Governor’s Committee attempted to satisfy black demands for integrated accommodations gradually, Sanford attracted both national acclaim and segregationist

²³⁵ Louis F. Lawler to Thomas W. Lambeth, August 10, 1962, Box 233, Folder “Restaurant Integration Problem,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²³⁶ James P. Dees to Terry Sanford, September 25, 1962, Box 233, Folder “Restaurant Integration Problem,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²³⁷ Terry Sanford to James P. Dees, September 26, 1962, Box 233, Folder “Restaurant Integration Problem,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

scrutiny for his comments on the crisis in Oxford, Mississippi in September 1962. During the period of unrest that surrounded James Meredith's attempted integration of the University of Mississippi, Sanford publicly commended the Kennedy Administration's response by saying "he had never been prouder of the President."²³⁸ This apparent endorsement of the use of federal troops to restore social order and enforce integration—a most dramatic example of the violation of states' rights—sounded a dangerous alarm for many white Carolinians. In their eyes, it confirmed suspicions that Sanford represented another licentious, deceiving politician who would sell out the state's law-abiding white citizens in return for political favors from Washington. Arch-segregationists perceived Sanford as merely following the example of his predecessor Luther H. Hodges, who President Kennedy appointed as Secretary of Commerce in 1961. As a furious Louis F. Lawler questioned Sanford aide Tom Lambeth, "Are you by any chance seeking a seat the feet of the gods in Washington as Hodges did? Or are you willing to destroy white society in our state merely to stay on the good side of the despicable Kennedy administration?"²³⁹ In the view of such hardline segregationists, the affinity of Sanford and other white men for the Kennedy Administration threatened to erode not only states' rights but also the foundational principles of honor, social order, and traditional masculinity. These had given the white South the moral high ground, both historically and in the contemporaneous Cold War context.

For others, Sanford's statement served as the apogee of their dissatisfaction with the direction of the Democratic Party. For example, constituent J.C.D. Bailey of Rocky Mount

²³⁸ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 105.

²³⁹ Louis F. Lawler to Tom Lambeth, August 1962, Box 233, Folder "Restaurant Integration Problem," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

warned the governor: “you were able to fool a great many voters in our state during the last primary. These same voters have now learned the truth about you. *You are a disgrace to our state.*”²⁴⁰ Additional critics openly announced their disaffiliation with the governor’s party. As H.R. Ross informed Sanford in a letter, “when the registration office opens in Greensboro these principles will be transferred elsewhere. I am going to register as an independent and hold my nose while I vote a straight Republican ticket this November.”²⁴¹ When the midterm election results emerged, it became clear that Ross exemplified a growing trend in North Carolina. As Sanford and his aides had feared, both arch-segregationist candidates and Republicans gained seats in the General Assembly, with the latter claiming their largest number of house seats in the legislature since Reconstruction.²⁴² Committed white supremacists had no voter apathy in 1962 and they used their ballots to punish Sanford for sacrificing the “purity” of North Carolina’s white democracy on the altar of moderation and personal gain.

At the same time, Sanford encountered increasing opposition and disillusionment from black leaders for his half-hearted, rhetorical embrace of racial equality that avoided the immediate resolution of their demands. Instead, the rhetoric of North Carolina’s business and political elite erected what CORE’s James Farmer later termed “the tobacco curtain” to consistently emphasize the state’s unique brand of racial progressivism while ignoring the

²⁴⁰ J.C.D. Bailey to Terry Sanford, October 4, 1962, Box 232, Folder “Segregation B,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers [emphasis in original].

²⁴¹ H.R. Ross to Terry Sanford, September 30, 1962, Box 232, Folder: “Segregation R-V,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁴² Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 306-307.

protracted racial strife that occurred during the Freedom Highways campaign.²⁴³ Even as numerous cases of police brutality, mass arrests, and white intransigence continued to erupt, North Carolina remained an exceptional case of Southern progress in the eyes of politicians and media outside the state. The state's "progressive mystique" made it more difficult for local leaders in the black freedom struggle and the heads of the nation's four major civil rights organizations to end systematic injustice. Sanford used this mystique well to position himself as a moderate caught between two extremes. Moreover, the press had plenty to cover as Kennedy Administration attempted to deal with Southern governors engaged in more overt forms of massive resistance.

Despite Sanford's praise for the integration of the University of Mississippi, along with indications that he would propose another biracial committee in 1963 to address the issue of employment discrimination, the black freedom struggle in North Carolina pressed on and intensified during the last months of 1962. Throughout the fall, black activists in Greensboro engaged in mass marches to protest segregated accommodations at two downtown cafeterias. As local CORE leader William Thomas exhorted the marchers, "we do not want superficial and hypocritical freedom... efforts at negotiations have proved fruitless, reflecting an attitude of 'nonchalance' by white participants."²⁴⁴ Similarly, black activists in Durham expressed their discontent with token school integration by picketing Sanford's appearance at all-black Durham and Hillside High Schools in October. After white officials denounced this protest as uncouth and uncivil, Dr. Ray Thompson retorted, neither "CORE

²⁴³ Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart*, 241-242.

²⁴⁴ William Thomas, qtd. in Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 113.

nor the NAACP owes anyone an apology for using a lawful and peaceful means... to demonstrate the widely held dissatisfaction with the seemingly total absence of official efforts to hasten first class citizenship for Negroes in North Carolina. The Governor must not be left to believe that Negroes are satisfied with their present state of segregation.”²⁴⁵

In Statesville, Rev. Wilson Lee and Floyd McKissick worked to identify and then organize against local companies that held contracts with the federal government but refused to hire black applicants.²⁴⁶ In November, Martin Luther King Jr. lobbied Sanford on the issue of police brutality in the coastal city of Edenton where SCLC field staff, including Golden Frinks and Rev. Fred H. LaGarde, helped lead protests against discrimination in employment and public accommodations. After numerous arrests in Edenton, King asked the governor to exert “the influence of your office to free protesters in Edenton North Carolina who have been arrested in violation of Constitutional rights. Picketing is basic to our freedom guaranteed under the Bill of Rights. It is a blot against the name of North Carolina that such a horrendous law against picketing exists.”²⁴⁷ As these efforts demonstrate, the local protest movements that emerged outside the cities of Greensboro and Durham forced CORE to move beyond its original design and to follow the lead of local and state leaders who advanced an all-out assault on Jim Crow rather than focusing solely on the desegregation of public accommodations. Instead of having their demands co-opted by national leadership, local African American leaders capably shaped the course of the Freedom Highways campaign. In

²⁴⁵ Dr. Ray Thompson, “Freedom of Expression,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 10, 1962.

²⁴⁶ Floyd B. McKissick to Rev. Wilson Lee, November 1, 1962, Folder 6934: “Chapters: Statesville, N.C.: CORE-NAACP: Arrests for Trespass, 1962-1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

²⁴⁷ Martin Luther King Jr. to Terry Sanford, November 1, 1962, Box 232, Folder “Segregation H-K:,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

doing so, they used long-standing organizational networks to make economic and political equality, along with citizenship, central to the dignity and manhood of black North Carolinians.

The approach of Terry Sanford and North Carolina's white political class to the civil rights drives of 1962 indicates the diverse nature of white Southerners' responses to the Civil Rights Movement. Moreover, the oppositional visions of manhood advanced by black civil rights activists and arch-segregationists forced Sanford to try to redefine manhood as consistent with racial moderation. In doing so, the governor crafted a response that emphasized the virtues of honor and realism in the responses of Southern white men to racial strife. Sanford's use of a form of *realpolitik* to stake out a middle ground between advocating full and immediate legal equality and "massive resistance" to black demands contrasts with more laudatory narratives about white Southern liberals in the civil rights era. Although black leaders in North Carolina recognized the difference between Sanford and other Southern governors, such as Ross Barnett in Mississippi, they often utilized mass demonstrations to push Sanford beyond gradual, token reforms and symbolic gestures. At the same time, civil rights leaders understood that Sanford opposed arch-segregationists and committed himself to defending North Carolina's reputation for progressive leadership in the South. And they used that for leverage. As a result, direct action campaigns throughout the state represented a diverse, though definitive, assertion of black manhood that forced Sanford to re-define his own masculinity. This all-out assault on the political institutions that allowed discrimination in private and public accommodations, public schools, and employment practices effectively

challenged men on both sides of the color line to decide how far they would go to either resist or support the demands of the Civil Rights Movement.

As an astute politician, Sanford understood the potency and the depth of segregationist arguments against legal and social equality in the state. Rather than confront this directly, he opted for a middle course in public. Despite his moderate sensibilities and admiration for the Kennedy Administration, Sanford also recast his claim to masculinity and Southern identity—and by extension the claims of his white moderate men—by emphasizing his role as the defender of the state’s progressive reputation. Sanford’s emphasis on civility and law and order attempted to assuage white anxieties over the decline of segregated public spaces. In doing so, Sanford portrayed himself as representing the majority of moderate North Carolinians who neither took part in civil rights demonstrations nor opposed integration based on hatred or racism. Moderation and cordial race relations characterized the state’s unique reputation for progress and racial fairness in the minds of white liberals, thus providing them with a mechanism for delaying immediate action to resolve structural inequalities. By revising the narrative of the state’s “progressive mystique” in the heart of battle and erecting the “tobacco curtain,” Sanford simultaneously undercut black demands for immediate and systematic change. At the same time, the governor recognized that he could no longer defend the state’s progressive reputation while ignoring the demands of the state’s African American community. Although Sanford sought to determine the pace and extent of social change in North Carolina to calm arch-segregationist fears, the mobilization of black

civil rights activists and the state's reputation effectively pushed Sanford to end, temporarily, more gradualist approaches.

Indeed, fear ruled in North Carolina just as it pervaded the rest of the South. In the face of reactionary white violence, black activists put their bodies on the line to claim the dignity and rights denied to them by Jim Crow. This assertion of racial dignity undermined the misguided belief that black Carolinians passively accepted the state's "progressive mystique." In response, white supremacists feared that neither law nor order could prevent African Americans from willingly entering previously all-white spaces. Moreover, these arch-segregationists grew anxious at the potential for white liberals to acquiesce in the imposition of a new racial order. Although white moderates and liberals held political power in the General Assembly and the Governor's Mansion did not act to make substantive changes. Instead, they feared a loss of control over the pace and scope of social change. The threat that black demonstrators could undermine their authority and the state's progressive reputation pushed Governor Sanford and his allies to defend their claims to manhood and to uphold the honor and traditions of North Carolina. Lastly, black activists' commitment to an all-out assault on the social, economic, and political systems that propped up a culture of racism forced the state's white citizens to consider the limits of their commitment to racial hegemony. By overcoming years of violence, disenfranchisement, and subjugation, black leaders insisted that white Southerners to confront publicly their fears about the region's past and future.

CHAPTER 3:
“The Only Weapon We Have Found:” Democracy, Moderation, and the Protest Movements
of 1963-1965

The Governor’s speech brought the African American servers and kitchen staff at the Carolina Inn in Chapel Hill to a standstill. Speaking to the North Carolina Press Association on January 18, 1963, Terry Sanford declared that black Carolinians’ inability to gain and maintain good jobs had created a stumbling block to the progress of a race, a state, and a nation.²⁴⁸ Sanford then proceeded to detail the creation of the “Good Neighbor Council” (GNC). This council presented itself as a potentially transformational group of appointed officials charged with the task of eliminating employment practices that discriminated on the basis of race.²⁴⁹ Moreover, it spurred the creation of a committee of mayors’ that worked to develop common strategies, along with copious bi-racial committees in towns and cities throughout North Carolina. As gubernatorial aide John Ehle remarked, the speech reflected Sanford’s sentiment that “his announcement” should take place “in the most public forum he could find, and in the town he must have known was best able to lead the way.”²⁵⁰ Despite this vote of confidence in Chapel Hill, waves of protests, both in this university town and throughout North Carolina between January 1963 and 1965, frustrated Sanford and threatened to derail his efforts to bring good will, racial harmony, and a curtailment of race-baiting politics to the state.

²⁴⁸ John Ehle, *The Free Men* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965), 61.

²⁴⁹ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 580.

²⁵⁰ Ehle, *The Free Men*, 62.

Sanford had no re-election bid looming at a time when Washington increased its pressure on Southern states to take action on civil rights. Many historical accounts thus emphasize the last two years of Sanford's term as full of bold rhetoric that focused on redeeming white politicians struggling against their arch-segregationist rivals. These works rely on Sanford's unpublished memoir and other retrospective statements to conclude that Sanford's thinking underwent a transformation and he "began to pull back the cloak of caution" in the last two years of his administration.²⁵¹ However, accounts from Sanford, his allies, black activists, and white segregationists revealed more continuity and caution than an "evolution" toward bold, urgent action. Moreover, the resurgent white opposition to Sanford emerged not just as a response to the governor's pronouncements, but also as an attempt to re-establish order against what they perceived as black lawlessness made possible by white moderate men's capitulation. This conflict in itself demonstrates that Sanford's efforts to convince both militant segregationists and African American activists of the necessity and practicality of gradual change often produced the opposite result. The reality experienced by North Carolinians in urban areas across the state testified to a more contested and contingent environment.

For black Carolinians, the promise of a new era of political leadership in North Carolina and the nation proved empty without their direct involvement in ending the structural injustices that plagued society. Why then, did Governor Terry Sanford's promises for reform and racial harmony fail to mollify civil rights activists in North Carolina between

²⁵¹ Quote found in Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 50-52; See also Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 288-289, 329.

1963 and 1965? For one, many urban, white business and political leaders clung to their moderate course, which relied on a racially paternalistic vision of democracy that denounced direct action as a harmful and unnecessary means of political expression. Moreover, paternalism functioned as a medium that allowed white moderates to concentrate decision-making in an attempt to limit both political backlash and immediate changes to the social structure of the state. Contrary to narratives about Sanford's abandoning a guarded approach to civil rights, the governor and other white moderates remained cautious about the political consequences of allying with black leaders. Demonstrations stoked arch-segregationist backlash. As a result, Sanford opposed them both philosophically and as a political necessity.

Gradualism provided the key guiding principle for white moderates. Only when African American men and women pursued advancement in the economic and cultural realms of society, these leaders argued, could the state eradicate racial prejudice, and all should concede that this would take time. Such a view demanded that African Americans prove themselves worthy citizens and asked nothing of ordinary white Carolinians, whose mindset needed changing the most. These sensibilities allowed the governor and his allies to distance themselves from the Civil Rights Movement while also portraying themselves as realistic defenders of law and order. However, African American activists' persistent agitation rejected the white moderate view that citizenship and respect for manhood and womanhood should be earned gradually with education, good will, and negotiation. As black leaders continued to use direct action and civil disobedience, increased political activity among arch-segregationists and the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina exacerbated moderates'

fatalism and hampered their attempts to end racial discrimination in a gradual, deliberative manner.²⁵²

The collective actions of younger and more rural African American activists reflected a vision of manhood that would neither accept the indignities of Jim Crow laws nor the co-optation by white moderates on biracial committees. In municipalities such as Statesville and Williamston, a modicum of African American voters made local and state leaders hesitant to push for piecemeal reforms or token integration. Yet, older and more middle-class black leaders in cities such as Durham and Greensboro viewed negotiation as an imperfect, but ultimately preferable method of procuring change. Whether eager to push Sanford closer toward other Southern governors or toward racial equality, black and white Carolinians continued to challenge the prevalent view that whites really preferred progress over traditionalism.

This chapter follows these strategies and sensibilities from the governor's speech in January 1963 through the mass demonstrations that rocked the state's urban areas to the end of Terry Sanford's term in January 1965. Throughout this two year period, white moderates, arch-segregationists, and civil rights leaders sought different goals through a variety of methods and rhetoric. However, conflicting iterations of masculine dignity couched in the languages of democracy and Christian morality defined the political struggles and racial strife of this period. For African American activists, direct action combined with broader claims to equality in Christian brotherhood and citizenship indicated their manhood. This political performance countered the masculinity of hardline segregationists who also used

²⁵² Anthony J. Badger, "Closet Moderates: Why White Liberals Failed, 1940-1970," 102-126.

Christian rhetoric to insist on racial inequality and the protection of Jim Crow. And for white moderates, masculine dignity manifested itself in proactive, honorable leadership, which associated social and political stability with compassion and modernity.

What became known as Sanford's "Second Emancipation Speech" at the Carolina Inn brought praise from many national observers and leaders, both black and white. The day after the speech, an editorial in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* described it as: "Wild and radical talk for a Southern officeholder. But Terry Sanford has shown before that he is willing to risk his own future in an effort to push his state forward. And North Carolinians have increasingly shown more interest in their economic future than in the myth-shrouded traditions of their past."²⁵³ CORE National Director James Farmer also praised Sanford's speech asserting that he "view[ed] with hope the North Carolina Good Neighbor Council which you have set up with clearly stated purposes."²⁵⁴

Among local and state civil rights leaders, the speech received a mixed reaction and brought increased scrutiny. Generally, the mostly middle-class black men who headed local and state NAACP chapters welcomed Sanford's sentiments while simultaneously demanding tangible results. From Charlotte, Kelly Alexander commended Sanford's statement as "the most significant step taken by a governor anywhere in the South in the field of economic rights."²⁵⁵ The Winston-Salem NAACP chapter similarly praised Sanford for his "fairness, militancy and exhibition of moral courage when you spoke out against discrimination in

²⁵³ *Louisville Courier-Journal*, January 22, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation K-L," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁵⁴ James Farmer to Terry Sanford, January 25, 1963, Box 346, Folder: "Segregation E-F," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁵⁵ "Sanford Hailed for Courage in Proposal," *Carolina Times*, January 26, 1963.

employment.”²⁵⁶ In the eyes of black Carolinians, this statement set Sanford apart from his Southern colleagues and their praise reflected the fact that he served as their best chance for cooperation with the white power structure.

At the same time, many civil rights activists responded in a less effusive manner to Sanford’s words. Both younger and older African American leaders also understood Sanford’s political dilemma and held no illusions that the governor and his allies could be trusted to carry out wholesale racial reforms on their own volition. For example, the day prior to the speech, Sanford presented his “Observations for a Second Century,” to a biracial group over breakfast at the Governor’s Mansion. Although his words and GNC proposal received the support of the majority of those who attended, Durham Committee member John Wheeler criticized it as too cautious because it relied on moral persuasion rather than the force of law. In response, Sanford claimed that the political climate in the General Assembly made a bold legislative effort impossible.²⁵⁷

For many African American leaders, the political constraints on white moderation did not mean they would hold Sanford to a lower standard. As *Carolina Times* editor Louis Austin opined, the governor “had bravely walked up to the crossroads” at which Sanford would choose between a legacy that testified to “the courage of his conviction” or one that emphasized his “beautiful and high-sounding words.”²⁵⁸ Even among the more moderate and middle-class black leadership, the belief that the governor and his moderate allies needed to

²⁵⁶ Winston-Salem NAACP to Terry Sanford, January 21, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “M-Mc,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁵⁷ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 295.

²⁵⁸ Louis Austin, “Governor Sanford at the Crossroad,” *Carolina Times*, January 26, 1963.

prove the sincerity of their words remained nearly universal. Predictably, the praise of prominent white liberals and some black civil rights leaders for Sanford's stance raised the political stakes for arch-segregationists.

Despite the formation of a statewide GNC, complemented by a committee of white mayors and numerous local GNCs, civil rights activists in nearly all North Carolina's urban areas took to the streets between May and July of 1963. The failure of local leaders to secure extensive, tangible gains in ending various forms of discrimination helped invigorate protest movement in cities such as Charlotte, Greensboro, New Bern, and Wilmington. Much like the Freedom Highways campaign, the role of youth and local organizational structures led to demonstrations that began in the central Piedmont and soon expanded to other areas. During the summer of 1963, CORE and NAACP youth leaders and college students bolstered local movements across the Coastal Plain. A group of NAACP youth leaders known as the Commandos, including Floyd McKissick's daughter Jocelyn, helped mobilize community organizers and activists throughout the state.²⁵⁹

In many cases, the frustration of dealing with the bureaucratic gradualism of local, biracial committees and more moderate city leaders fueled the momentum of activists. Charlotte provides a case study of the often contentious relationship between white moderates and local activists. Despite the leadership of Mayor Stanford Brookshire, Charlotte experienced a wave of protests in the spring of 1963. In January, Brookshire expressed his optimism in a letter to Sanford "that Charlotte is making progress" in the area of race relations, due to the fact that city leaders had "the cooperation of the responsible

²⁵⁹ Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 82-83.

leadership in both races in this undertaking.”²⁶⁰ However, in May, Reginald Hawkins berated Brookshire, in a letter copied to the governor, for not implementing an agreement to desegregate hotels and motels in exchange for ending demonstrations.²⁶¹ Hawkins took issue with the fact that the mayor had demanded that “the student leader and myself to handle all complaints” through the Community Relations Committee, which Hawkins derided as “reactionary.”²⁶² Within days, State Highway Patrol reports showed the growth of direct action campaigns across much of the western Piedmont, including mass demonstrations and marches in the nearby cities of Shelby and Gastonia.²⁶³

In Durham, Greensboro, and Raleigh, the sluggish pace of desegregation in public accommodations and employment, despite the efforts of the Freedom Highways movement, also inspired a growing protest movement. For example, NAACP youth leaders in Durham determined that many white-owned businesses that hired a few African Americans after the previous summer’s protests soon fired their new employees or demoted them to menial positions.²⁶⁴ In response, hundreds of black youth and students from North Carolina College, now North Carolina Central University, picketed outside Howard Johnson’s and other downtown establishments with signs that mocked Durham’s progressive reputation and

²⁶⁰ Stanford Brookshire to Terry Sanford, January 17, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation B,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁶¹ Reginald Hawkins to Stanford Brookshire, May 11, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation B,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁶² Reginald Hawkins to Stanford Brookshire, May 11, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation B,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁶³ J.R. Vanderford to Director Walter F. Anderson, May 16, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation A,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁶⁴ Walter Riley (Durham NAACP Youth Chapter), Quntion Baker (North Carolina College NAACP), Isaac Reynolds (CORE Field Secretary) to W.W. Tudor, and Laura’s Restaurant, February 18, 1963, Folder 6883: “Chapters: Durham, N.C.: Boycott of Merchants, 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 88.

exhorted “Vote to Make Democracy More than a Word.”²⁶⁵ Similar indignities catalyzed new protests in Greensboro as local student and adult leaders grew tired of city officials’ refusal to hire more black employees as well as the stubborn refusal of business owners to desegregate restaurants in the city’s downtown area.²⁶⁶ In both cases, Sanford and other moderates sought to restore law and order to relieve the racial tension engendered by direct action and white counter-protests. Then constructive dialogue among people of good will could follow.

As thousands of African Americans marched and willingly went to jail, Sanford decided to intervene by asking North Carolina A&T President Lewis Dowdy to force students to return to campus or risk disciplinary action. The fact that the college received its funding from the state added a considerable stake to complying with this request. To complement the governor’s efforts, local leaders in Greensboro, including Mayor David Schenck and a new biracial committee led by black physician Dr. George Evans attempted to negotiate another settlement to end the marches in exchange for promises of reform.²⁶⁷ However, as local CORE leader William Thomas recalled, for many of the student leaders, the “old guard” of black middle class did not address “long-range economic issues” beyond desegregation of lunch counters.²⁶⁸ According to Thomas, these older African Americans “didn’t have their bodies out there.” White moderates needed “to recognize the youthful leadership,” and understand “that these people that you want to talk to are not the ones

²⁶⁵ Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 90-91.

²⁶⁶ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 119-121.

²⁶⁷ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 131-136.

²⁶⁸ William A. Thomas Jr., Interview by Eugene E. Pfaff, August 13, 1982, GreensboroVOICES Collection.

controlling the situation.”²⁶⁹ Some activists also recognized that this more radical strategy could strengthen the hand of more moderate black leaders who supported negotiation with white politicians.

Here, students advanced a more militant performance of manhood and womanhood one that publicly sought to push the civil right struggle beyond middle-class concerns and short-term, superficial progress. Dorothy Robinson, a student leader in Greensboro, called on the governor to re-think his approach as she asked Sanford to first “see to it that the negro Constitutional rights are enforced,” and then, “the good will and Christianity will certainly follow.”²⁷⁰ Sanford tersely replied, “I do not know... what you think I could do to help the situation that I have not already done... Surely you would not want me to do anything that would increase the tension or destroy the traditional feeling of good will which has existed in our state.”²⁷¹ In defiance of the governor, Mayor Schenck, and many older, middle-class black leaders, hundreds of activists led by Jesse Jackson, William Thomas, and James Farmer resumed protests by marching on two downtown hotels. As Jackson declared to the crowd on May 23, “Dismissal cannot stop this movement. Bullets cannot stop this movement. Even the governor cannot stop this movement.”²⁷² In a letter to the governor, the local chapter of CORE also warned Sanford that due to the caution of the “mayor and restaurant owners” combined with “police brutality against women and children,” the protests would

²⁶⁹ William A. Thomas Jr., Interview by William H. Chafe, 1975, William H. Chafe Oral History Collection, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

²⁷⁰ Dorothy Robinson to Terry Sanford, May 21, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation N-R,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁷¹ Terry Sanford to Dorothy Robinson, May 29, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation N-R,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁷² Harry Nash, “Negroes Stage March on 2 Hotels in Greensboro, *Durham Morning Herald*, May 24, 1963.

“continue...until the walls come tumbling down.”²⁷³ This rhetoric of student activists conveyed a different iteration of manhood. Young black men reasserted their masculine rights by calling for the protection of women and children. Challenging white moderates’ championing of law and order by underscoring the lawlessness of the police, they rejected negotiation as a tactic because it could not eliminate the underlying attitudes treated black bodies as dispensable.

Meanwhile, on May 10, 1963, hundreds of black and white North Carolinians marched from the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh to the Governor’s Mansion downtown. There a crowd of about seven hundred gathered on the south lawn and filled the air with freedom songs. After a half an hour passed, Sanford emerged from the mansion, dressed in formal wear for a fund-raising gala that continued inside. Sanford addressed the crowd saying, “I’ll be glad to talk to you about any of your problems, any of your grievances, any of your hopes. This is not the time, or the place...You are not bothering me at all. You can stay here another hour or so, if you like. I’ve enjoyed the singing.” When a protestor quipped, “We are not here to entertain you, governor,” Sanford replied “you are not here at my request either, friend, if you want to talk to me at any time about your plans and your problems, let my office know.” At this suggestion, another member of the crowd piped up saying that Sanford “should have known our troubles.”²⁷⁴ Following this last retort, Sanford returned inside the Governor’s Mansion and the demonstrators retreated to the Shaw campus.

²⁷³ Greensboro CORE to Terry Sanford, June 7, 1963, Box 346, Folder “Segregation G,” Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁷⁴ Bob Lynch and Roy Parker Jr., “Negroes Boo Gov. at Mansion,” *News and Observer*, May 11, 1963; Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 313-315.

It may have been rare for a white, Southern politician to willingly address the grievances of black protestors in public. Yet, it by no means signaled a change in Sanford's preferred method, a *détente*, or a commitment to cooperation with civil rights leaders. In a response to a student at St. Augustine's College, a historically black college in Raleigh, who apologized for the "insult and indignity" the governor received due to the protests, Sanford asserted, "I do hope that it will be possible for us to solve these problems with a minimum of bitterness which is usually engendered by such activities."²⁷⁵ Nearly a week after the march on his residence, Sanford publicly declared, "North Carolina hopes to demonstrate to the world that prejudices can be erased and full opportunities can be opened up in a climate of restraint and a spirit of good will... Others may fight, but we will reason. Others may operate out of inflamed passions, but we will proceed with a calm faith in the intrinsic goodness of the children of God."²⁷⁶ Despite the governor's appeals for "calm" deliberation over protest, demonstration marches on downtown businesses continued, as protestors clutched signs asking "Will Raleigh Become Another Birmingham?"²⁷⁷ After two more weeks of protests, Raleigh Citizens Coordinating Committee Chairman Charles A. Lyons Jr. wrote to Sanford expressing views similar to student leaders in Greensboro. According to Lyons, because a "third week of nightly protest marches," did not "bring about in our city peaceful compliance with the spirit of our country," the state needed "continuing nudging from you so that

²⁷⁵ Councille E. Blye to Sanford, May 16, 1963, Box 346, Folder: "Segregation B," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁷⁶ Jerry Doolittle, "Governor Sees Racial Calm in NC," *Washington Post*, May 19, 1963.

²⁷⁷ Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 211.

transition might occur quickly and without further delay and tension.”²⁷⁸ Sanford hardly budged. In both public and private statements he insisted that African American activists recognize and have faith in the Christian morality and sense of fairness that he believed characterized most white North Carolinians.

Despite the governor’s paternalistic call for “restraint,” African American direct action reached its apogee in late May particularly in response to white violence and police brutality. These growing direct action campaigns coupled with often violent counter-protests by hardline segregationists and equally violent police tactics pushed Sanford to become more involved in local politics. Even after Greensboro Mayor David Schenck called for “prompt and decisive action” to address the grievances of civil rights activists, Jesse Jackson’s arrest yielded “more boisterous” demonstrations. In turn, this produced counter-protests by what a State Highway patrolman described as “more than the usual number of white persons.”²⁷⁹ Highway Patrol officers also kept the governor abreast of Ku Klux Klan threats in Greensboro and white vigilantes who routinely marched through primarily black neighborhoods in nearby High Point.²⁸⁰ In Durham, bomb threats forced armed guards to stand outside the McKissick home. As a result, newly-elected Mayor Wensell Grabarek moved quickly to form a committee with the “white and Negro leaders in the business community...to resolve the issue.”²⁸¹ Although black activists warned that demonstrations

²⁷⁸ Charles A. Lyons Jr. to Terry Sanford, June 2, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁷⁹ “Session Called on Greensboro’s Racial Troubles,” *Durham Morning Herald*, June 7, 1963.

²⁸⁰ W.F. Anderson, Memo to Col. David T. Lambert, May 29, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation A,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁸¹ “New Mayor Acts Swiftly to Solve Issue,” *Carolina Times*, May 25, 1963.

would resume without substantive action, white business owners emphasized that the protestors' demands could only be met if negotiations began with "responsible 'Negro leadership,'" including John Wheeler and Asa Spaulding.²⁸²

Whereas white moderate city officials in Durham and Greensboro helped broker racial truces, white political intransigence and vigilantism remained an issue in other Piedmont cities. Even as Durham hotels and restaurants began to serve African American customers, protests spread to towns and cities across the state including Lexington, Fayetteville, Wilmington, and Chapel Hill.²⁸³ In Lexington, a town just south of Greensboro and Winston-Salem, a counter-protest resulted in the death of one white man, which police blamed on local blacks, and a white mob threatening to occupy the main African American section of town. Meanwhile, in Oxford, a "tobacco town" just thirty miles northeast of Durham, Highway Patrol officials reported that tension increased after two days of consecutive sit-ins as groups of whites chased and threw rocks at black protestors, prompting a similar response from many black youth.²⁸⁴ Although a report from the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) recommended the governor send in "200 highway patrolmen or the National Guard," the agency also noted that "so far no one has been seriously injured, with exception of three of four Negroes that got beat up the other night, which was not serious."²⁸⁵

Lastly, in early July, warnings of Klan activity surfaced near Fayetteville as the governor

²⁸² "Negro Groups in Durham Issue Thanks, Warning," *Durham Morning-Herald*, May 23, 1963.

²⁸³ "Calls for End to Protests, Start on Negotiations" and "More Eating Establishments Drop Barriers," *Carolina Times*, June 22, 1963.

²⁸⁴ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 144; Agent L.M. Harton to SBI Director, June 15, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation H-J," Governor Terry Sanford Papers; Ronnie Jordan, "Riot in Lexington Leaves One Dead, One Wounded: 7 Negroes Held; More Arrests Are Expected," *High-Point Enterprise*, June 7, 1963.

²⁸⁵ Agent L.M. Harton to SBI Director, June 15, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation H-J," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

instructed local and state police to investigate a handbill that urged white men to “act now” to ward off the threat of “liv[ing] with the niggers.”²⁸⁶ Yet, on a consistent basis, Sanford refused to send in the National Guard, instead preferring to allow for local negotiations over the more unsettling and unbecoming sight of guardsmen keeping order in the state.

Due to the intensification of black direct action combined with the danger posed by white violence across the state, Sanford decided in June to call the major demonstration leaders to Raleigh to discuss potential solutions.²⁸⁷ Nearly 150 African Americans attended. For Sanford and white moderate politicians at the state and local levels, these solutions identified demonstrations as the primary cause of racial tension. This did not bode well for negotiation because African American activists emphasized the slow pace of racial change as the source of their discontent. During the meeting with the governor, they presented a resolution challenging Sanford’s leadership by asserting: “in a democracy such as ours, the government cannot change the people, the people must change the government.” The resolution further called for greater efforts on Sanford’s part to end discrimination in employment and to work with local school boards in developing desegregation plans.²⁸⁸

Sanford responded by claiming that he would “not let mass demonstrations destroy us” and that the goals of the black community could only be solved through good-will negotiations and education. Sanford attempted to identify with the black freedom struggle by

²⁸⁶ Col. David T. Lambert to Terry Sanford, July 2, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁸⁷ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 597.

²⁸⁸ “Statement of North Carolina Demonstration Leaders Presented to Governor Terry Sanford at Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina,” Folder 7126: “Correspondence: Sanford, Terry, 1963-1964,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

declaring, “your enemy and mine is a system bequeathed us by a cotton economy, kindled by stubbornness, intolerance, hotheadedness, north and south.” Positioning himself as an ally who understood the structural roots of inequality, Sanford concluded “the way to fight this common enemy is education.”²⁸⁹ The governor also announced the appointment of Capus Waynick, a former newspaper editor in High Point and U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua and Colombia, as the state’s mediator or “racial troubleshooter.”²⁹⁰

Black leaders who attended the meeting refused to back down from their position. In its aftermath, McKissick spoke on behalf of the group and conveyed their general disappointment that “the Governor misunderstands the situation,” as “the majority of white people of North Carolina have not begun to grasp the point of the demonstrations.”²⁹¹ To counter Sanford’s claim that demonstrations had “reached the point of diminishing returns,” black leaders promised “bigger and better protests” to prod white politicians further out of recalcitrant positions.²⁹² Despite the ongoing negotiations at the local level and the discussion at this conference, Sanford’s call for an end to direct action protests received little response as demonstrations continued unabated in communities throughout the state.

The urban demonstrations of early summer 1963 revealed the chasm between conceptions of manhood and democracy both within and between the black and white communities in North Carolina. For black activists, pressure applied through direct action

²⁸⁹ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 597-599.

²⁹⁰ Capus Waynick, interview by William Finger, February 4, 1974, Southern Oral History Program.

²⁹¹ “Disappointment First Reaction of Protest Leaders,” *Carolina Times*, July 3, 1963.

²⁹² “Sanford’s Racial Peace Plea Met By Defiance of Negroes,” *Rocky Mount Evening-Telegram*, June 26, 1963; Roy Parker Jr., “Negro Leaders Reject Plea By Sanford, Plan Protests,” *News and Observer*, June 26, 1963.

provided the most effective means for exercising their limited political power in order to expedite the end of Jim Crow. By asserting that black Carolinians needed a government that responded to their petitions and recognized their equal citizenship, the protest movement advanced a vision of democracy where grassroots political activism mattered just as much as the leadership of "high-minded" elites. The internal debate within the movement over negotiation versus demonstration also represented differing generational views on the proper political performance of manhood. Middle class and older black leaders performed manhood by pragmatic negotiation; younger and more radical activists located manhood in their refusal to accept co-optation by white politicians without dramatic changes to the social order. Both younger black activists and older black leaders sought to advance their case that African Americans deserved first-class citizenship immediately. However, white moderates continued to fear the possibility of arch-segregationist backlash as African American leaders refused to give up on direct action.

As the protests spread, Sanford faced increased pressure from reactionary segregationists who found his leadership weak compared to other white, Southern governors. Much like the criticisms that emerged after the Freedom Highways campaign, arch-segregationists responded to how the governor handled protest movements by challenging his manhood directly and indirectly. In a letter to Sanford, constituent H.V. Carver pointedly demanded, "the time has come for you to prove what kind of a man you are by backing our other Southern Governors round up these trouble makers and protect our fine state from

being a black jungle like our beautiful capitol city of Washington, DC.”²⁹³ For such hardliners, Sanford’s expressed desire for law and order appeared hypocritical if he did not take forceful action to curb civil rights demonstrations. Similarly, C.C. Lore of Rocky Mount warned Sanford of the long-term consequences of his moderation. As a self-proclaimed “register[ed] democrat for more than fifty years,” Lore expressed his disgust by asking Sanford, “what will you do when the negro boy comes around and takes your daughter out for a ride?”²⁹⁴ Sanford’s failure to counter the threat of social equality, which would inevitably lead to miscegenation, clearly imperiled white women and children in the minds of militant segregationists. And so they warned that the governor’s reticence abrogated of white men’s most sacred duty to defend the purity of white women from interracial sex.

Despite his willingness to engage with black civil rights leaders, Sanford’s disapproval of African American direct action drew praise from more practical segregationists.²⁹⁵ As historian Jason Morgan Ward observes, practical segregationists eschewed the language of black criminality, and instead “debated the most effective strategies for warding off federal intervention.”²⁹⁶ For these white North Carolinians, the series of widespread demonstrations both risked federal interference and threatened economic modernization. At the same time, it also confirmed their worst suspicions about the

²⁹³ H.V. Carver to Terry Sanford, May 28, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation C,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁹⁴ C.C. Lore to Terry Sanford, May 16, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁹⁵ On “practical segregationism,” see Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, 18-74; Jason Morgan Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, 100-106.

²⁹⁶ Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, 100.

state's African American population, offering evidence of black immaturity and incapacity for political leadership.

Convincing these segregationists that Sanford and other white moderates could preserve social order despite widespread protests served as an important political task for the governor and his lieutenants. For example, gubernatorial aide Tom Lambeth marked a letter from L.H. Bennett, the Vice President of Sales at Carolina Steel in Greensboro, to Sanford as important. In it, Bennett stated: "I hope that you will tell this minority group to go home and stay home and behave like first-class citizens; and if this is done, I think maybe the climate will in time become such that adjustments which are in order and seem inevitable can be made sensibly and carried out peaceably."²⁹⁷ In another letter to Sanford and city officials, a white Raleigh store owner expressed his disgust with the situation in his city: "it now appears that the trespassers feel confident that they can violate our property rights without arrest or prosecution. The time has come when, as taxpayers and citizens, we must call on the Police Department for protection."²⁹⁸ Other letter-writers expressed support for Sanford while still relying on similar sentiments about black lawlessness. R.E. Carrington, Randy B. Deese, and John R. Scroggins wrote to the governor claiming that "mass demonstration is a form of mob rule and can not [*sic.*] be tolerated if law and order is to prevail... You, Honorable Governor

²⁹⁷ L.H. Bennett to Terry Sanford, June 6, 1963, Box 346, Folder: "Segregation B," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

²⁹⁸ Walter Honaker to Terry Sanford, May 17, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation H-J," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

Sanford, are to be highly commended for your courageous stand.”²⁹⁹ Practical segregationists also found Sanford’s public statements condemning direct action as in line with their views.

This group of white Carolinians believed his appeals for the restoration of law and order as reasonable, yet strong. Nor did Sanford’s stance resemble the brash, blustering masculinity of other white governors in the South. For example, after George Wallace demanded that the Kennedy Administration hold North Carolina to the same standard as Alabama when it came to civil rights, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board came to Sanford’s defense. In an editorial entitled “The Clash of Rights,” the newspaper asserted that although “there remains no doubt much more discrimination in North Carolina than men of good will might wish. But the government of North Carolina is accepting its responsibility to lead the way to change. So doing, it has guarded its rights to manage its own affairs.”³⁰⁰ Perceptions of lawlessness always combined with fears of unfavorable national attention to influence Sanford’s responses. And from a national perspective, North Carolina did appear more progressive when compared to more overt defiance in the Deep South.

Within its borders, however, the General Assembly’s 1963 session provided a mixed bag for a governor intent on defending the state’s reputation. Although the legislature passed a bill abolishing the requirement that businesses provide separate toilet facilities for African and white patrons, the Speaker Ban Law of 1963 clearly damaged the state’s progressive image. The bill prohibited either known or suspected Communist speakers from visiting

²⁹⁹ R.E. Carrington, Randy B. Deese, and John R. Scroggins to Sanford, June 20, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation C,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³⁰⁰ “The Clash of Rights,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 4, 1963.

state-supported campuses.³⁰¹ Conservative lawmakers passed this legislation as a means of “sending a message” to liberals, civil rights leaders, and protestors on college campuses, where civil rights protest had percolated since the 1950s.³⁰² Lacking the power of a veto, Sanford could do nothing to prevent its passage. In this, it reflected the conservative criticisms of UNC Chapel-Hill, which WRAL-TV’s Jesse Helms made a frequent target of his editorials for its tolerance of black activism and liberal ideas. White moderates, by contrast, recognized this as an attack on free speech and academic freedom. Both University President William Friday and Sanford considered the bill an attempt by hardline segregationists to incite racial fears and prejudices.³⁰³ Lacking the power of a veto, the governor could do nothing to prevent its passage. Although the Speaker Ban Bill would later be declared unconstitutional it brought negative national attention to the state at a critical moment.

African American leaders in smaller towns and cities in the eastern part of the state faced continued challenges and expanded their operations accordingly to keep the pressure on local white power structures. Through the efforts of the NAACP Commandos, a nationally-funded group of Youth Council leaders, the Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina moved into areas that remained untouched by the Freedom Highways campaign and urban protests in the Piedmont. This black activism took root in the eastern cities such as

³⁰¹ Sen. Henson P. Barnes, *Work in Progress*, 312.

³⁰² On the broader significance and long-term results of this law see William A. Link, “William Friday and the Speaker Ban Crisis, 1963-1968,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 72 (April 1995): 198-228; William J. Billingsley, *Communists on Campus: Race, Politics, and the Public University in Sixties North Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999).

³⁰³ William A. Link, “William Friday and the Speaker Ban Crisis, 1963-1968,” 200-201.

Greeneville, Laurinburg, New Bern, and Wilmington.³⁰⁴ For example, in the latter days of the Greensboro demonstrations, reports from the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) and Highway Patrol indicated to the governor that “Mr. James Farmer, Director of CORE, and William Thomas of A&T College CORE group, were in Eastern North Carolina on Monday arranging for demonstrations to be held at Greeneville, New Bern, Kinston and Washington, North Carolina.” The ostensible goal of this strategy involved organizing “students from A&T College and Bennett College to lead in these demonstrations in their home towns as soon as they return home following commencements at their schools.”³⁰⁵ At the same time, these student organizers relied on, and occasionally clashed with, the local, middle-class black ministers and professionals.

The NAACP targeted Wilmington as a site for the Commandos to challenge what it considered tepid attempts to restore the peace. In March 1963, three months before the Commandos arrived, Mayor O.O. Allsbrook and other city leaders partnered with black leaders to inaugurate the Wilmington-New Hanover County Biracial Committee, which initially consisted of eighteen white and eight black members.³⁰⁶ That same month, NAACP field staff reported to Floyd McKissick that although they “established fine line of communication” with members of the Biracial Committee in discussing negotiations with the management of downtown, segregated theatres, no substantive solution had emerged.³⁰⁷ The

³⁰⁴ Charles W. McKinney, Jr., *Greater Freedom: The Evolution of the Civil Rights Struggle in Wilson, North Carolina* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010), 147.

³⁰⁵ W.F. Anderson, Memo to Col. David T. Lambert, May 29, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation A,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³⁰⁶ “Municipal Response to the Challenge: Wilmington,” in Capus M. Waynick, John C. Brooks, and Elsie W. Pitts, eds., *North Carolina and the Negro*, eds., 176-177.

³⁰⁷ Robert Johnson to Floyd McKissick, Folder 7165: “Wilmington NAACP Chapter 1963,” Floyd B.

NAACP Commandos and field staff faced difficulties, however, in convincing the “more progressive” students and the older generation to embrace direct action as the primary tactic for demanding action by city leaders. The fact that nearly half the African American community in Wilmington reportedly had the ability to vote provided local leaders with greater political leverage than other black leaders had in nearby cities.³⁰⁸ After the Commandos’ arrival, sit-ins and demonstrations occurred at major downtown stores and restaurants.

City leaders attempted to placate the demands of black leaders through both accommodation and attempted negotiation. For example, Dr. H.A. Eaton, as co-chairman of the bi-racial committee and a prominent black physician, along with Mayor Allsbrook addressed a mass meeting in early June in an attempt to convince African American activists that their demands “would take some time.”³⁰⁹ After weeks of sit-ins, the City Council and County Commissioners refused to entertain the ordinances proposed by black leaders, and instead opted to pass a resolution affirming its “confidence in the Biracial Committee” and stating that “the board encourages a policy of desegregation.”³¹⁰ This resolution indicated white moderates’ belief that black activists should be realistic and alter their strategy as a show of good faith that would then build support for voluntary desegregation among business and political leaders in the community.

McKissick Papers.

³⁰⁸ Robert Lee Blow, Report to Floyd M. McKissick, June 10, 1963, Folder 7165: “Wilmington NAACP Chapter 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³⁰⁹ Report from Wilmington Chapter of the NAACP, July 23, 1963, Folder 7166: “Wilmington NAACP Chapter 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³¹⁰ Report from Wilmington Chapter of the NAACP, July 23, 1963, Folder 7166: “Wilmington NAACP Chapter 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers; “New Hanover Board Backs Desegregation,” *Durham Morning Herald*, June 21, 1963.

The initial round of demonstrations over segregated accommodations and the lack of “conspicuous hiring” of African Americans also prompted a visit from Capus Waynick, in his role as the state’s “racial troubleshooter.”³¹¹ Even after the bi-racial committee, at Waynick’s suggestion, added more members of both races to subcommittees, white and black ministers from Missouri and New York joined the continued sit-ins and marches in downtown Wilmington throughout August.³¹² Wilmington’s civil rights struggle demonstrated how African American activists, with mixed success, utilized their power to ensure that the members of the bi-racial committee effectively and urgently advocated for their demands.

Meanwhile, in smaller cities such as Fayetteville, local African American military personnel buttressed the efforts of local civil rights organizations. Civil rights leaders used the integration of the armed forces and the fact that some schools in these areas had been integrated for nearly five years to support their case.³¹³ For example, demonstrators in Fayetteville, home to Fort Bragg, picketed downtown stores for discrimination in accommodations and hiring practices while carrying, “signs stating ‘We have integrated Fort Bragg, why not Fayetteville’ and ‘First Korea- Now Fayetteville.’”³¹⁴ Despite these efforts to leverage white leaders’ Cold War emphasis on American equality and democracy, the

³¹¹ Col. David T. Lambert memos to Terry Sanford, July 10-11, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³¹² *News and Observer*, August 8, 1963, “Police Arrest 21 in Racial Protest at Wilmington Café,” *Durham Morning-Herald*, August 16, 1963.

³¹³ Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 350.

³¹⁴ Col. David T. Lambert memos to Terry Sanford, July 10-11, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

governor refused to become involved in local affairs; instead he relied on Capus Waynick as a liaison between state and local government.

Police brutality in these cities also created trouble for the state's progressive reputation and the bi-racial committee strategy advocated by white moderate leaders. As African American youth marched on the Holiday Inn and A&W Drive-Ins in New Bern, white policemen beat Willie Edwards and William Slade with nightsticks before instructing the property owner to turn fire hoses on the demonstrators.³¹⁵ In August, NAACP Commandos along with local activists launched a direct action campaign in Goldsboro despite the warnings of a prominent African American Baptist minister in the community. Activists responded by holding mass meetings and marches with advertisements that spoke to the gendered politics of the civil rights struggle. One handbill advertising such an effort included excerpts from freedom songs, including one line from the song "Which Side Are You On?:"

Oh Brother Can't You Stand It
Oh, Tell Me How You Can
Will You Be An 'Uncle Tom'
Or Will You Be A Man.³¹⁶

In this rendering, black protesters portrayed inaction as antithetical to the rights they deserved as dignified men and citizens.

³¹⁵ Ronald Johnson, Report for July 16, 1963, New Bern, Folder 7157: "Chapter: New Bern, NC," Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³¹⁶ Originally an anthem of labor organizers, African American activists adopted and adapted it to reflect their own experiences. This version appeared on a handbill in August 1963 calling for a mass meeting at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church followed by a downtown march in Goldsboro, North Carolina. "The Fight for Freedom Must Go On!" Folder 7154: "Chapters: Goldsboro, N.C., Other Materials, 1963-1978 and undated," Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

Adding to the frustration of local black leaders, a bi-racial committee appointed by Mayor Scott B. Berkeley failed to “move rapidly enough” to initiate desegregation efforts.³¹⁷ However, gangs of white men, totaling around five hundred, from Goldsboro and other local communities attacked the marchers and other black bystanders with rocks and glass bottles.³¹⁸ In response to these mass demonstrations and white violence, white leaders in Goldsboro turned to Waynick for help forming bi-racial committees that could end demonstrations. A few days after this spate of local violence, Waynick successfully convinced white businessmen to participate in the newly-formed committee. According one local white businessman, named Willie P. Kemp Jr., the city’s white citizens “should look at all sides and then act on a course of action because it is right and because it is the Christian thing to do.” However, Kemp added that if white leaders did not “voluntarily act the government will step in and compel us to act” and enforce “discriminat[ion] in favor of Negroes” which represented “a real danger.”³¹⁹ These comments provide insight into how white moderates and practical segregationists in Goldsboro, and throughout the state, attempted to balance their economic pragmatism with the rhetoric of Christian brotherhood and gradualism and the potential consequences of inaction.

In a speech on the front steps of the Wayne County Courthouse, Waynick claimed that white and black citizens should seek solutions instead of perpetuating the problem. In addressing African American protestors, Waynick declared, “I would counsel our Negro

³¹⁷ AP Reports, “72 Negroes Jailed At Goldsboro,” *The Durham Sun*, August 10, 1960.

³¹⁸ Col. David T. Lambert memo to Terry Sanford, August 15, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³¹⁹ Willie P. Kemp Jr., “The Only Hope,” *Goldsboro-News Argus*, August 10, 1963.

citizens to put more trust in the white people who are responding to this emergency.”³²⁰ The language employed by Waynick demonstrated how white moderates ignored or refused to recognize the urgency of civil rights’ activists demands. Nor did they accord activists’ safety from white violence equal weight. After Waynick and white leaders spoke again at a mass meeting as a show of good faith, local CORE and NAACP members responded by narrowly voting in favor of a temporary moratorium on direct action.³²¹ In response, the bi-racial committee secured a promise from the local school board to select a black member to fill its next vacancy. Despite the fact that African Americans made up forty-two percent of the city’s population, the local white newspaper lauded this announcement as a “fair and just decision” and a “significant” victory.³²²

Despite their willing participation in the bi-racial committee, African Americans in Goldsboro remained determined to use direct action if necessary. In a meeting with the bi-racial committee, one Dr. Cherry, a local black dentist, underscored the importance of the committee taking urgent action by stating, “you’re asking us to subvert the only weapon we have found in 100 years to work.” More significantly, Cherry took this opportunity to assert the stakes in gendered terms. He argued that “this is a fight to... nothing but full American life,” and declared that as a black man, he “fought because I believed in the completeness of my manhood and color, white or Negro will make no difference (to my daughter) if she finds

³²⁰ “Waynick Asks Equality for All N.C. Citizens: Must Lower Barriers,” *Goldsboro News-Argus*, August 21, 1963.

³²¹ Col. David T. Lambert memos to Terry Sanford, August 15 and 22, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³²² “Bi-Racial Group Adds a Feather To Its Cap,” *Goldsboro News-Argus*, August 17, 1963.

that her daddy has been a man.”³²³ Cherry’s comments signify that, despite moderates’ distaste for their methods, the masculine dignity provided by direct action suggested that anything less than securing the rights of first-class citizenship implied an abdication of black manhood.

In New Bern, white business leaders proved less willing to cooperate with local civil rights leaders. New Bern city leaders formed a bi-racial committee in August with participation of white and black representatives of the local Marine Air Base. Despite negotiations between committee chairman W.C. Chadwick, Waynick, McKissick, and local Rev. Leon C. Nixon, white business owners proved reluctant to concede to the demands of local NAACP leaders on employment and accommodations.³²⁴ As a result, the local NAACP youth chapter informed Sanford, “we exceedingly regret that further direct action is necessary; however, our good faith negotiations with the white merchants of this city have failed to bring about even a token of good faith integration. Our future, as Americans, and the dignity of our race is at stake.”³²⁵ African American men leading these direct action campaigns refused to allow white businessmen and politicians to co-opt, their right to democratic participation.

Whereas these urban areas in the largely rural eastern part of the state possessed more moderate mayors along with pragmatic businessmen of both races, conditions in small towns and urban areas elsewhere did not prove as conducive to the creation of effective and

³²³ Bi-Racial Subcommittee and CORE Meeting Minutes, August 14, 1963, Folder 7147: “Chapters: Goldsboro, N.C: Minutes and Reports, 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³²⁴ Waynick, Brooks, Pitts, eds., *North Carolina and the Negro*, 133-134.

³²⁵ Linda Boone and Rev. Leon C. Nixon to Terry Sanford, November 22, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation B,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

responsive bi-racial committees. For example, white mayor Melvin G. Cording of the Duplin County town of Wallace expressed the concern of “small town mayors” that the “cure recommended by the mayors of our larger cities could become a cancerous disease for us” as white business owners threatened to close before they would allow integration. Cording also posited that “I am concerned and am pinning a more optimistic hope on the possibility of raising the economic level of all people than on bi-racial committees to solve the apparent beginning of a struggle which may engulf all.”³²⁶ In hoping that the amelioration of poverty among both races would eliminate racial tension in towns such as Wallace, Cording’s view reflected the approach of Sanford and his moderate allies who advanced education and public anti-poverty initiatives as the key to appeasing all sides.

In less-populated urban areas such as Statesville in the Piedmont, where African Americans remained almost universally disenfranchised, the chances for negotiation diminished. For example, after attending the June conference of black leaders, Rev. Wilson Lee of Statesville characterized the governor’s “speech and lack of positive proposals” as “disappointing.” Lee also challenged Sanford’s view of race relations in North Carolina:

we prefer negotiation to demonstration... but are you aware that there are many areas in North Carolina where men are unwilling to sit down and discuss the problems of the communities with their colored brothers? There are other communities where the officials will discuss with the Negro the problems of the community but refuse to do anything about them. There are other communities where officials will engage in discussion with the Negro, only as a means to delay integration and to distraught the Negro’s aim.³²⁷

³²⁶ Melvin G. Cording to Sanford, July 11, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation C,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³²⁷ Rev. Wilson Lee to Terry Sanford, June 27, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

These comments provided a trenchant critique of white moderates' faith in deliberation and belief that white Carolinians' good will and sense of Christian brotherhood would recognize the dignity and masculinity of African American men. After Lee described how these barriers hindered the black freedom struggle in Statesville, Sanford re-affirmed his confidence "that the great majority of our people do want to see these problems handled through negotiation, and I am certain that this is the only way if we are to maintain good will and understanding."³²⁸ However, for local leaders like Rev. Lee, years of delays, empty promises, and police brutality indicated a situation quite different from the one the governor envisioned.

In September, Lee and other local CORE and NAACP leaders expressed their disappointment with Statesville Mayor J. Garner Bagnal's refusal to propose any plan for desegregation until after the municipal elections in November. According to these black leaders, given that "not one thing ha[d] been desegregated," Mayor Bagnal misunderstood that "a change... in the Council, will not change the request, attitude, and determination of those who are asking only for what is right."³²⁹ Things grew more complicated in late September. In a recall election, Statesville voters booted out six city council members who had helped pass the integration of city swimming pools. In response, black leaders in Statesville vowed to re-double their efforts to "drive this evil from the community."³³⁰ With

³²⁸ Terry Sanford to Rev. Wilson Lee, July 3, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation K-L," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³²⁹ R.R. Woods, T.V. Mangum, J.C. Harris and Wilson Lee to Mayor J. Garner Bagnal, September 10, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation K-L," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³³⁰ "Voters Oust Statesville Council Over Integration of Swimming Pools," *Carolina Times*, September 28, 1963. The six newly-elected city councilmen included three write-in candidates.

little voting power in municipal elections, African Americans in communities such as Statesville could only advance their demands through direct action or negotiation with committees that had no power, aside from pragmatic self-interest, to enforce the solutions they devised.

In the eastern North Carolina town of Williamston, SCLC leaders Golden Frinks, Sarah Small, and Rev. Fred H. LaGarde challenged the ability of a recently-appointed bi-racial committee to address their grievances.³³¹ Although Williamston's committee partnered with the City Council to remove "segregation signs" and to integrate tax listings in early July, violent, white counter-protests continued.³³² On July 12, white citizens in Williamston kicked and threw cigarettes at protestors, while the "city's sanitation unit" released insecticide on them.³³³ In response, Frinks lobbied Sanford to use "the moral and physical influence of your office" to bring about "good faith negotiations."³³⁴ For Frinks, good faith negotiations meant something profoundly different than the bi-racial committees supported by Sanford. Frinks, much like Rev. Lee, conceded that "the better way is to have good faith negotiations." But, he added, without action or recognizing "the demands of the Negroes as righteous, moral,

³³¹ On the longer history of the black freedom struggle in Williamston, see Amanda Hilliard Smith, *The Williamston Freedom Movement A North Carolina Town's Struggle for Civil Rights, 1957-1970* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2014); David C. Carter, "The Williamston Freedom Movement: Civil Rights at the Grass Roots in Eastern North Carolina, 1957-1964."

³³² Waynick, Brooks, Pitts, eds., *North Carolina and the Negro*, 172-173.

³³³ Golden Frinks telegram to Terry Sanford, July 12, 1963, Box 346, Folder: "Segregation E-F," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³³⁴ Golden Frinks letter to Terry Sanford, July 13, 1963, Box 346, Folder: "Segregation E-F," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

lawful and that which rightfully belongs to all citizens,” no negotiations could be conducted in “good faith.”³³⁵

In order to increase the political power of the black community in Williamston, Rev. LaGarde lobbied the governor to “use the powers of your office to open the registration books for period of 60 days in Martin County and Williamston.”³³⁶ Soon thereafter, County Commissioner J.H. Thigpen telegraphed Sanford claiming, “registration books are always open prior to any election. Frinks does not live in this county nor does he represent or speak for any responsible local Negroes.”³³⁷ As a result, Sanford concurred with Thigpen. “I do not have the power to do what you suggest. In the second place,” he tersely responded to LaGarde, “I do not feel that special privileges ought to be made available to anyone regardless of their race.”³³⁸ These exchanges demonstrated why African American activists viewed Sanford’s strategy as inadequate, short-sighted, and illusory given the entrenched white power structure in more rural areas.

These efforts indicated the important debate over direct action versus negotiation to the respective democratic visions of African American activists and white moderate politicians in North Carolina. Geographic differences also complicated the ability of state and local officials to convince black leaders to trust the potential of high-minded people of good will that served on bi-racial committees. White leaders’ impotence in curtailing violence

³³⁵ Golden Frinks letter to Terry Sanford, July 13, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation E-F,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³³⁶ F.H. Lagarde to Terry Sanford, August 8, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³³⁷ J.H. Thigpen telegram to Terry Sanford, August 9, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³³⁸ Gov. Terry Sanford to F.H. LaGarde, August 13, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

confirmed for men like Lee, Frinks, and LaGarde that mass direct action proved consistent with manhood and democratic citizenship. Without the protection of the state, direct action exhibited a courage and dignity that aimed to defeat the segregationist argument that African Americans had to earn their citizenship and manhood through individual, personal responsibility. Moreover, the persistence of demonstrations as the preferred medium of black political expression also testified to the ineffectiveness of Sanford and Waynick's "racial troubleshooting" approach.

Excluding the negotiations in Goldsboro, Waynick's record as a racial mediator proved inconsistent in bringing white business leaders and black activists to the negotiating table. In a profile on August 26, the Raleigh *News and Observer* described Waynick as "on the run from the mountains to the coast."³³⁹ Despite the economic and political differences between these cities and towns, African American activists, both with and without the support of national organizations, resisted what they perceived as co-optation by bi-racial committees. Wary of the potential political costs of mandating or legislating in favor of racial equality, white community leaders offered few commitments to action and, in many cases, stood idly as police brutality and white violence targeted black citizens. When local white officials rebuffed appeals for immediate, substantial action on civil rights, black leaders turned to the power of the state, increasingly demanding the involvement of the governor and General Assembly for advancing a statewide solution. Yet Sanford and Waynick continued to direct the grievances of civil rights leaders toward local committees, thereby avoiding negative attention for the state as a whole. Ironically, perhaps, Sanford's response to the Civil

³³⁹ "Capus Waynick: State's Racial Mediator on the Run," *News and Observer*, August 26, 1963.

Rights Movement during the late summer and fall of 1963 increased his national profile. The middle course that he tried to chart made it appear to outsiders that he could capably execute his responsibilities as North Carolina's chief executive.

To preserve this favorable national attention for his public statements, Sanford downplayed the image of North Carolina as a state on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, when given the opportunity to draw attention to his leadership on civil rights issues in the state by testifying to the Senate Commerce Commission on Civil Rights legislation, Sanford demurred. This decision frustrated Sanford's critics on both sides. Donald P. Irish, a white UNC- Chapel Hill professor and a member of the local Good Neighbor Council expressed his dismay that "Dr. I Beverly Lake has accepted such an invitation is now going to appear to speak for North Carolina."³⁴⁰ With one eye on the Democratic gubernatorial primary looming in early 1964, Sanford responded, "I hope you will trust my judgment to control my activities to the extent that we do not inadvertently put Lake in office."³⁴¹ Such a statement signaled the governor's commitment to a form of paternalistic moderation that could insulate political decision-making from the impassioned demands of grassroots activists on both sides of the color line.

Contrary to these worries about Sanford's refusal to testify before Congress, his administration worked to maintain the state's positive image at the national level. For example, Sanford's legal advisor Joel Fleishman instructed aide Bob Cordle to "discreetly"

³⁴⁰ Donald P. Irish to Terry Sanford, August 9, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation H-J," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³⁴¹ Terry Sanford to Donald P. Irish, August 9, 1963, Box 347, Folder: "Segregation H-J," Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

provide him with “a copy of the legislative act passed by the 1963 General Assembly which repealed the requirement that there be in industrial establishments separate toilet facilities for each race,” and to send another copy to David Robinson who served on the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.³⁴² In early August 1963, after receiving a “collection of... public statements and the related press comments,” Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy praised Sanford’s “courageous leadership” as well as his “frank and outspoken concern over the manifest injustice of racial discrimination.”³⁴³ Later that month, during his speech at the March on Washington, NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins called upon “lawmakers to be as brave as our sit ins and marches, to be as daring as James Meredith, to be as unafraid as the nine children of Little Rock, and to be as forthright as the Governor of North Carolina.”³⁴⁴ Even with African American protestors agitating for change across the state and local authorities responding with brutality in certain cases, Sanford and his white moderate allies succeeded at promoting a positive and tolerant image for the state at the national level.

For African American leaders in North Carolina, the March on Washington provided the impetus for a statewide mobilization of activists to challenge the national media coverage, or lack thereof, of the Civil Rights Movement in the state. In early September, black leaders formed a conference to lead a march on Raleigh under the direction of McKissick as chairman, Golden Frinks, and Charles McLean, an NAACP Field Secretary.³⁴⁵

³⁴² Joel Fleishman to Bob Cordle, August 6, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation N-R,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³⁴³ Robert F. Kennedy to Terry Sanford, August 7, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation K-L,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³⁴⁴ Roy Wilkins, August 28, 1963, “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom: Speeches by the Leaders,” <http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/speeches-leaders#> [accessed October 17, 2014].

³⁴⁵ “Meeting of CORE, NAACP, and SCLC Representatives,” September 19, 1963, Folder 7189: “March on

This March on Raleigh (MOR) committee ostensibly formed “to support local demonstrations in their efforts in solving the problems that have continuously burdened the Negro citizen and the entire State of North Carolina.”³⁴⁶ The MOR leadership, however, excluded Kelly Alexander and many “older Negro leaders” who opposed the proposed march, especially because it focused on the governor instead of the General Assembly.³⁴⁷ At the same time, more “old guard” NAACP officials dedicated their organization to a large-scale voting drive in advance of the 1964 elections and continued direct action to open up schools, restaurants, and jobs to African Americans. They set the lofty goal of defeating segregationist U.S. Senator Sam Ervin Jr.³⁴⁸ Sanford had often consulted the Alexander brothers and utilized their influence in the black community to pressure civil rights activists, most notably Robert Williams. Such trust indicated that the governor and his allies believed that the state NAACP leadership represented the more practical and “responsible” faction of civil rights activists. Despite their skepticism of Sanford, other middle-class black leaders like Kelly and Fred Alexander recognized the utility of not staging a massive demonstration in front of the governor’s mansion.

After negotiations with Sanford proved futile, the MOR movement presented itself as a sustained direct action campaign that would seek to undermine racial discrimination and economic inequality. By October, the MOR movement focused on three central demands:

Raleigh, 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³⁴⁶ Floyd B. McKissick, Golden Frinks, and Charles McLean, “Resolution of the Joint Conference Office: SCLC, CORE, NAACP,” September 19, 1963, Folder 7189: “March on Raleigh, 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³⁴⁷ “Question of March Yet Unsettled; Magazine Lists CORE Target Towns,” *Carolina Times*, September 28, 1963.

³⁴⁸ “Tarheel NAACP Convention Starts Drive for 250,000 Negro Voters,” *Carolina Times*, October 19, 1963; “10,000 New Negro Voters Sought,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 17, 1963.

“uniform,” statewide legislation ensuring voter registration and integrated public accommodations; increased efforts to promote merit-based employment; and a repeal of the state’s right-to-work law.³⁴⁹ Although the March on Raleigh itself never materialized, the issues MOR advanced combined with the NAACP’s voter registration drive demonstrated the black civil rights leaders’ broader dissatisfaction with the moderate, political and economic strategies of white politicians. By embracing a wide range of tactics and goals, movement leaders challenged the belief that their demands could be handled by local, bi-racial committees without involving the governor or the state legislature.

The governor’s response to the march confirmed again his disapproval of African American direct action. After a conference with MOR leaders in Raleigh, Sanford announced that he had “no intentions of letting groups over-run the governor’s home. The place to transact business is in the capitol, where my office is located.” Even after media told him that “integrationists” planned to march on the Capitol building instead, Sanford asserted that such a demonstration “would be extremely unwise” and “would produce nothing good.”³⁵⁰ Indeed, a number of arch-segregationist groups supported this view. For example, the Executive Committee of the Durham County White Citizens’ Council wrote to Sanford in September 1963 to express their “appreciation for the Governor’s stand and public statement” that denounced mass demonstrations. According to the organization’s president Harold Hodges, “the many occasions on which the Governor has shown his strength, understanding, and

³⁴⁹ March on Raleigh Committee Meeting, October 24, 1963, Folder 7189: “March on Raleigh, 1963,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³⁵⁰ North Carolina College *Campus Echo*, “March on Capitol? Leaders Approve Idea,” September 20, 1963.

courage,” deserved praise from the state’s white citizens.³⁵¹ This favorable response to the governor’s stance by white conservative elites indicated the effectiveness of Sanford’s cautious approach to civil rights protestors. By stressing that black activists’ plans for a march on Raleigh threatened the state’s reputation for racial peace and calm deliberation, Sanford staked out the position of a “*paterfamilias*” for the state. In this capacity, he sought to convince all Carolinians, especially those within the Democratic Party, that he could best control the situation at hand for the benefit of the state as a whole.

Because of these political pressures, Sanford and his aides worked to prevent the march from taking place. Gubernatorial aide Tom Lambeth and Sanford sought out the advice of W.R. Collins, a friend of the governor’s and head of an industrial education school in Johnston County, who suggested the governor hold a bi-racial conference with Martin Luther King Jr. “without any mention of it being a counter move for the march.” Collins reasoned that once King “thoughtfully and constructively” considered “first hand report on what North Carolina has done and is doing,” he would convince Frinks and McKissick to call off the march.³⁵² These exchanges reflected the paternalistic sensibilities that underpinned Sanford and other white moderates’ posture toward African American civil rights leaders. For them, MOR leaders misunderstood the tenuous nature of white Carolinians’ good will and thus threatened to “poison the well” with this march. Equally significant, with the next gubernatorial election approaching, Sanford and his allies feared the consequences of

³⁵¹ Durham County Citizens’ Council to Sanford, September 18, 1963, Box 347, Folder: “Segregation H-J,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

³⁵² W.R. Collins to Terry Sanford, September 25, 1963, Box 346, Folder: “Segregation C,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers.

ongoing direct action for the candidate they hoped would defeat I. Beverly Lake a second time, federal judge L. Richardson Preyer.

The North Carolina Democratic Party's gubernatorial primary in 1964 occurred in the midst of two events that brought race and civil rights to the forefront of the campaign. First, in Washington D.C., a Congressional debate raged over what would become the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Second, a revived protest movement in Chapel Hill and Durham aimed to force those cities, especially Chapel Hill, to live up to their reputations for progressive thinking. The confluence of these debates and protests with the gubernatorial primary further threatened to undermine the political continuity sought by Sanford and other white moderate Democrats. Much like the anxiety white moderates experienced in the run-up to the 1962 midterm elections in the midst of the Freedom Highways campaign, they viewed the persistence of protests as a threat to derail the election hopes of their faction within the state Democratic Party.

CORE officials, under the leadership of Farmer and McKissick, believed that opening Chapel Hill to integrated accommodations would prove the viability of "open cities" in the South and advance the passage of the Civil Rights Act.³⁵³ Beginning in January 1964, the movement for public accommodations in Chapel Hill promised to launch a "massive action of non-violent nature" if the Board of Alderman refused to adopt an ordinance supporting the complete integration of public accommodations. When the Board voted four to two against the adoption of the ordinance, hundreds of students from UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke, and North Carolina College joined a mass meeting led by James Farmer and marched on downtown

³⁵³ Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 74-75.

Chapel Hill.³⁵⁴ In response, Sanford declared, “this kind of action... [is] so irresponsible that the entire cause of Negro progress is set back. I call on all citizens to repudiate this kind of approach.”³⁵⁵ By refusing to heed this admonition, local leaders, with some national support in the case of Farmer, staked their claim that the state’s sterling reputation for racial peace could only be realized when the state granted equal rights to African Americans. As the movement escalated in Chapel Hill, Sanford and Waynick attempted to use negotiation to secure a moratorium on demonstrations.

In a February meeting with James Farmer and Floyd McKissick, Waynick reported, “the Governor... pointed [out] that North Carolina has quite a reservoir of good will and that there has been a generous reaction by many people to Negro grievances... But, he said that some of this good will is wasted away by the attrition of civil disobedience.”³⁵⁶ Moreover, Waynick emphasized that the meeting produced progress in discussing the potential drag of increased black unemployment on the state’s economy as well as the need for cooperation with the N.C. Film Board’s efforts “to present television programs documenting some of the Negro grievances.”³⁵⁷ Although these attempts at negotiation proved unsuccessful in ending the open accommodations movement in Chapel Hill, Sanford’s engagement with civil rights protestors increasingly drew the scorn of arch-segregationists and the Ku Klux Klan.

The state constitution prohibited Sanford from seeking another term as governor. Thus, the conservative forces that coalesced around the Speaker Ban Bill of 1963

³⁵⁴ “Farmer Throws CORE Support for Freedom Drive,” and “Brave Freezing Rain in Chapel Hill March,” *Carolina Times*, January 18, 1964.

³⁵⁵ “Gov. Threatens Force Against Demonstrators,” *Carolina Times*, January 18, 1964.

³⁵⁶ Tom Inman, “Sanford, Negroes Huddle,” *News and Observer*, February 26, 1964.

³⁵⁷ Tom Inman, “Sanford, Negroes Huddle,” *News and Observer*, February 26, 1964.

increasingly organized in an effort to defeat Sanford's desired successor in the 1964 gubernatorial contest. Once again, race served as a potent weapon deployed against the moderate candidate, L. Richardson Preyer, a Federal Court judge from Greensboro. Preyer faced off against Sanford's rival from 1960, I. Beverly Lake, and former state superior court Judge Dan K. Moore of Asheville. Moreover, Lake utilized Sanford's close relationship with John and Robert Kennedy and his support for Preyer in order to portray the Greensboro judge as a pawn of Washington liberals. By contrast, Lake insisted, to thunderous applause, that he would "not look to Washington for my instructions."³⁵⁸ Although Preyer emerged victorious in the first primary, he failed to garner a majority of the votes, leading to a run-off with Moore.

Out of the race, Lake and his supporters rallied to Moore's cause. In a televised speech on June 24, Lake used religious imagery to raise the specter of compliance with the Civil Rights bill under a Preyer administration. According to Lake, black civil rights activists formed "the great bulk" of Preyer's supporters who would "rub their hands in glee... at the thought of how you will suffer when the heavy hand of a cruel, wheeler-dealer administration in Washington presses down this crown of thorns upon your head."³⁵⁹ In drawing upon the language of former presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech, Lake tapped into the bitterness of white southerners who felt they had been unfairly demonized and victimized by the federal government.³⁶⁰ Also, this appeal to his audience's

³⁵⁸ "The Lake Platform," *The (Lexington) Dispatch*, December 6, 1963.

³⁵⁹ I. Beverly Lake, qtd. in Spence, *The Making of a Governor*, 104.

³⁶⁰ Regarding the longer history of white southerners' responses to national criticism and feelings of inferiority or victimization see Angie Maxwell, *The Indicted South*.

sense of Christian duty showed that arch-segregationists invoked their own version of faith, which highlighted Christian persecution, to undermine the respective messages of Christian brotherhood and the beloved community utilized by white moderates and civil rights leaders.

Moreover, after Lake's exit from the race, Klan members throughout the state did not abandon political mobilization, but instead worked feverishly to defeat Preyer. For example, deputies from the State Highway Patrol monitoring Klan activities reported that a rally near Charlotte included numerous Klansmen wearing "Moore for Governor" buttons.³⁶¹ Outside Chapel Hill, Klan leaders denounced Sanford and Preyer in a rally attended by nearly seven hundred Klansmen.³⁶² Moore handily defeated Preyer in the runoff by effectively portraying himself as the "middle-of-the road" candidate between the Sanford-Preyer coalition and the militant segregationist stance of Lake and the Deep South.³⁶³

According to Sanford, Moore's victory resulted neither from the new governor's political acumen nor from Preyer's shortcomings. Instead it lay in a series of what Sanford recalled as "the wildest, meanest, most damaging demonstration we had during my administration" that "erupted right in the middle of the campaign" in "Chapel Hill, of all places."³⁶⁴ As Sanford further reflected, "the fact that the [civil rights] demonstrations were still going on in a number of cities... I never really understood this. These people obviously were misguided. I never was able to pin down the fact that somebody was prompting them to

³⁶¹ David Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 90-91.

³⁶² Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 77.

³⁶³ James R. Spence, *The Making of a Governor: The Moore-Preyer-Lake Primaries of 1964*, (Winston Salem: Blair, 1968), 14-16; Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.*, 88-89.

³⁶⁴ Terry Sanford, Interview by Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, 1986, Southern Oral History Program Collection.

it, somebody from the Lake-Moore side. I don't really think so. I think it was just a terribly unfortunate break."³⁶⁵ Sanford's apparent frustration with "misguided" civil rights demonstrators who "were destroying the cause" during the 1964 contest recalled experiences from his own gubernatorial campaign. It also underscored his normative belief that social change occurred best through deliberation and negotiations between "people of good will."

Part of that "good will" translated into another effort to resolve persistent racial inequality by alleviating poverty among both races. Through the GNC and local bi-racial committees and in tandem with a program known as the North Carolina Fund, the governor and his allies promoted opening up employment opportunities for African Americans. More importantly, from a strategic point of view, attacking poverty would help also help poor whites throughout the state. Both of these programs reflected white moderates' belief that the black freedom struggle could truly advance only when education among whites gradually replaced ignorance and economic advancement displaced the white anxiety created by fears of integration and economic competition.³⁶⁶ However, this vision still left little room for meaningful participation in the decision-making process by African Americans. For example, after Durham CORE leader Floyd B. McKissick asked GNC chairman David Coltrane if the Council could investigate the amount of integration in the state's public schools, Coltrane replied saying he and the governor "doubt[ed] the expediency of such a... summary of token

³⁶⁵ Terry Sanford, Interview by Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, 1986, Southern Oral History Program.

³⁶⁶ Gavin Wright, *Sharing the Prize: The Economics of the Civil Rights Revolution in the American South* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 240-242.

integration.”³⁶⁷ Ironically, perhaps, Coltrane’s response reinforced for African American activists why they needed direct action and political empowerment through the ballot box.

Instead of addressing issues of school integration or public accommodations, Coltrane along with other state and local officials focused on vocational employment and improved education opportunities in African American communities. In this strategy, a stronger public education system took precedent over gradual desegregation. Addressing a group of white citizens in Goldsboro, Capus Waynick spoke in dramatic terms claiming, “I am not so sure this republic can stand unless this racial business is settled.” In Waynick’s view, racial tension in communities occurred because “when we fail to relieve the Negroes of inequality, they spend so much time in hatred of the white man, they are not in the best position to put down crime in their own people. A man simply can’t keep down crime if he is obsessed with his own mistreatment.”³⁶⁸ Again, Waynick placed the entire burden for change on African American men’s shoulders. Even so, such a statement stoked arch-segregationists’ fears and assumptions about black criminality. Instead of massive resistance or white retribution, Waynick and white moderates attempted to recast white manhood by suggesting that raising the economic livelihood of all people would encourage personal and social responsibility among black Carolinians. Similarly, in early April 1964, Coltrane spoke to the Raleigh Kiwanis Club emphasizing that “jobs are the fulcrum on which Negro progress rests,” and that would demonstrate the state’s “capacity for orderly change and the extent of its faith in

³⁶⁷ David S. Coltrane to Floyd B. McKissick, April 17, 1964, Folder 7126: “Correspondence: Sanford, Terry, 1963-1964,” Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³⁶⁸ “Capus Waynick: State’s Racial Mediator on the Run,” *News and Observer*, August 26, 1963.

the future.”³⁶⁹ For Coltrane, Waynick, and Sanford, this combination of “orderly change,” free of direct action, combined with economic progress for white and black Carolinians found its realization in the GNC and in the North Carolina Fund.

Coltrane’s and Waynick’s emphasis manifested itself in the GNC’s efforts to promote vocational education, especially among youth, as a means of ameliorating poverty by attacking what they saw as its structural underpinnings.³⁷⁰ For example, the Mayor’s Co-Operating Committee, an offshoot of the GNC, detailed how local and state officials “endeavored to impress upon Negro youth that one of the most important additions to North Carolina’s educational program is a far-reaching system 20 Industrial Education centers.”³⁷¹ In Rocky Mount, the local GNC worked with black high schools to help “promising juniors and seniors who are not planning a college career to interest them in secretarial and clerical training.”³⁷² However, much like the GNC more broadly, such efforts emphasized gradual steps that could eliminate inequality over the long-term.

As historian Charles W. McKinney’s study of Wilson demonstrates, African Americans continued to find “the progress of the Good Neighbor Council inadequate” as it effectively “allowed Wilson’s white leadership to remain fundamentally unprepared for even modest changes in power dynamics.”³⁷³ Likewise, NAACP field officer L.B. West claimed in October 1965 that the GNC in Statesville represented a “rubber stamp organization for the

³⁶⁹ “More Negro Jobs Seen by Coltrane,” *News and Observer*, April 11, 1964.

³⁷⁰ The belief that poverty resulted from cultural factors that de-emphasized education parallels Thomas J. Sugrue’s discussion of the “manpower theory” of labor relations in the post-1945 United States, See Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 7.

³⁷¹ Waynick, Brooks, and Pitts, eds., *North Carolina and the Negro*, 258-259.

³⁷² Waynick, Brooks, and Pitts, eds., *North Carolina and the Negro*, 259.

³⁷³ McKinney, Jr., *Greater Freedom*, 148-149.

power structure.”³⁷⁴ Moreover, many black leaders saw the shortcomings within the anti-poverty initiatives advanced by Sanford’s North Carolina Fund. If it attempted to break the so-called “culture of poverty” and promote social uplift, it did so without envisioning radical changes to the white power structure.³⁷⁵

In Goldsboro, skepticism of the Fund and the GNC further divided many in the African American community with regard to tactics. Following demonstrations in August 1963, local African Americans emphasized their right to full inclusion by presenting themselves as responsible and industrious citizens. The Goldsboro Bi-Racial Committee, with the backing of the state GNC, and the leadership of H.F. Cofield, an African American woman who served on the committee, pushed for programs for black students to advance their education instead of engaging in direct action. Cofield and T.C. McNeill, a local school principal, volunteered to help the students “improve the lot of their race” by abandoning protests and instead “supplement[ing] their education.” Coltrane publically backed this program as he announced that “in the long run, they’ll accomplish much more in this type of thing than in sit-ins.”³⁷⁶ Clearly, the efforts of black leaders in Goldsboro provided an important contrast to the protests in Chapel Hill.

“Operation Bootstrap” became the way that the Bi-Racial Committee in Goldsboro attempted to advance Cofield’s efforts. However, this operation excluded Dr. Cherry and

³⁷⁴ L.B. West, qtd. in Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.*, 85.

³⁷⁵ On the concept of a “culture of poverty” and its application to the War on Poverty and government anti-poverty initiatives such as the North Carolina Fund, see Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*; and Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

³⁷⁶ Phil Corner, “Study-In Replaces Marches in Goldsboro,” *News and Observer*, April 20, 1964.

other African American leaders, along with the NAACP Commandos and local youth. These divisions over tactics cut across class-lines as some ministers and local black business owners who united in the previous summer's demonstrations pursued this new strategy. For example, as black committee member and local funeral parlor director Geneva Hamilton observed, the organization sought to break the "cycle of poverty" by encouraging "poverty victims [*sic.*]" to embrace "self-reliance" and defeat apathy. In Hamilton's words, "this is no time to be worried about the race angle... it does not exist here."³⁷⁷ By promoting personal responsibility and self-education, these activists drew upon a longstanding tradition of racial uplift.³⁷⁸ As in the past, they aimed to achieve and protect the dignity of African American men and women in a way that might not incite further white violence. This vision of black manhood and womanhood also sought to build an interracial coalition with white moderate politicians and businessmen that could garner both financial and political support for their efforts.

Under the leadership of Hamilton, Cofield, and white male business leaders, Operation Bootstrap, Inc. ostensibly took its name and program from Booker T. Washington. Specifically, the program supported the "Industrial Education Centers" of the GNC, dignity through the training of black "maids, garbage workers, yard workers," and campaigns to "clean up, paint up, fix up" neighborhoods the city government considered decrepit.³⁷⁹ With

³⁷⁷ "Operation Bootstrap, Inc., Goldsboro, North Carolina," Folder 676: "Operation Bootstrap, Inc., Goldsboro, N.C.," NCCHR Papers.

³⁷⁸ See Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, esp. 61-89.

³⁷⁹ Geneva B. Hamilton, "Operation Bootstrap: A Self-help Proposal for Helping to Alleviate Ignorance and Poverty," Folder 676: "Operation Bootstrap, Inc., Goldsboro, N.C.," NCCHR Papers; "Here's How to Improve the Morale of Street Workers," *Goldsboro News-Argus*, August 3, 1964.

its initial campaigns to remove trash and eradicate vermin from abandoned houses in mostly African American neighborhoods, Operation Bootstrap received the public support of Sanford, Coltrane, and the N.C. Council on Human Relations. However, the corporation's application failed to procure funding from both the North Carolina Fund and the federal government under the Economic Opportunity Act.³⁸⁰

Diverting African American activism away from political-minded direct action campaigns toward educational uplift and personal responsibility corresponded with white moderate beliefs that an accommodationist strategy could lead to the gradual elimination of toxic, racialized politics. At the grassroots, however, Operation Bootstrap could not entice enough local volunteers to sustain its efforts, indicating that its preferred methods stood at odds with the civil rights movement's emphasis on "Freedom Now!" Yet an equally serious problem lay in securing funding to keep the programs operating. Thus, the rhetorical support from white moderates proved that the interracial dialogue and cooperation they championed still failed to deliver substantive change.

The North Carolina Fund program developed by Sanford constituted a statewide approach to tackle the "cycle of poverty." Sanford and the Fund's leadership specified that the program should operate with a two-pronged strategy to combat poverty, with one component being the Comprehensive School Improvement Program, and the other developing Community Action Programs (CAP) to coordinate anti-poverty efforts with local governments.³⁸¹ This plan reflected Sanford's belief in "a revitalized federalist system" and

³⁸⁰ "Operation Bootstrap Adopts its First Big Project," *Goldsboro News-Argus*, September 3, 1964.

³⁸¹ Terry Sanford, *Storm Over The States* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers, 1967), 174-175.

improved upon his educational program. As he said, “the children of poverty need special breaks if they are to be able to compete in our school system.”³⁸² Nevertheless, the Fund had to take root in local communities. One of its earliest efforts included training college student activists, known as the North Carolina Volunteers, to fan out across the state to assist the poor. Yet this integrated group experienced problems mobilizing poor African American and whites in various communities due to the obstruction of local white power structures. Elsewhere, black leaders criticized Fund leaders for failing to consult with African Americans in developing anti-poverty solutions.³⁸³ Although the Fund created a space for activists to organize poor communities to continue to pressure local leaders for redress of structural grievances, its designers did not envision an equal role for African Americans. Such oversights confirmed for black leaders the on-going need for political power. Left out of the decision-making process, the Fund’s anti-poverty efforts could not replace the dignity provided by direct action or, more importantly, first-class citizenship.

Further trouble for the state’s progressive reputation emerged in 1964 and 1965 as the F.B.I. reported that the United Klans of America (UKA) had quietly amassed its largest state membership in North Carolina under the leadership of Grand Dragon Robert Jones of Granite Quarry in Rowan County.³⁸⁴ Klan leaders organized in response to what they perceived as the weak, capitulating approach by the governor to federal civil rights legislation and railed

³⁸² Daniel J. Elazar, “In Memoriam: Terry Sanford,” *Publius*, 28, no.1 (January 1998): 259-261; Terry Sanford, *But What About The People?* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 129.

³⁸³ Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 105. For example, Charlotte-based civil rights activist Reginald Hawkins protested the fact that Fund leadership failed to consider local African American leaders in developing anti-poverty solutions in Charlotte.

³⁸⁴ Covington Jr., and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 342-343.

against the failure of state government to provide the type of safety valves adopted by other Southern states. In a public statement, Sanford denounced the “illegal practices” of Klan vigilantes and promised that he and state law enforcement would not “tolerate their illegal actions.”³⁸⁵

The governor relied mostly on the S.B.I. and Highway Patrol efforts to monitor and regulate Klan activity in the state. Thus, when potentially dangerous situations developed, the governor could work behind the scenes to prevent violence that might attract unflattering attention to the state. For example, in July 1964, after Klan members threatened a group of interracial, out-of-state college students who tried to help rebuild a black church in Wilson County, Sanford decried the UKA’s efforts and tried to diffuse the tension. Even though he denounced the Klan publicly, Sanford privately persuaded the student group to move to a hotel rather than stay with black families, in order to reduce fears about interracial contact.³⁸⁶ Klansmen burned a large cross on the lawn of governor’s residence in retaliation for his comments.³⁸⁷ By taking public stands against the deleterious effects of the Klan on the state’s reputation, Sanford distinguished himself from other white Southern governors. Challenging the Klan, Sanford’s political leadership exhibited a new masculinity that understood honor as protecting all citizens and preserving racial harmony through gradual, orderly change.

As Sanford exited office in early 1965, African American leaders across the state continued to push local and state officials for immediate, far-reaching reforms to create a more egalitarian society. Their on-going reliance on direct action to achieve more equitable

³⁸⁵ Mitchell, *Addresses and Papers of Governor Terry Sanford*, 623-624.

³⁸⁶ Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 54-56; McKinney, Jr., *Greater Freedom*, 160-162.

³⁸⁷ Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 57.

negotiation revealed the slow, piecemeal pace of social change under the Good Neighbor Councils, Sanford, and his successor Dan Moore. For example, African American activists continued to protest token integration in public education. By the end of Sanford's term, a mere 0.537% of all black pupils in North Carolina attended integrated schools.³⁸⁸ Moreover, in Durham, Ben Elton Cox and Grady Davis, an activist from Raleigh, held a rally in March 1965 that declared the two issues of "education and employment" as crucial to the next phase of the black freedom struggle.³⁸⁹ Here, they used Sanford's own professed goals to respond to the lack of substantive progress. Meanwhile, black Wilmington attorney Lisbon C. Berry complained to white University of Wisconsin professor Morgan Smith in 1965 that schools and Operation Headstart in New Hanover County remained segregated despite federal mandates for integration.³⁹⁰ Lastly, in New Bern, civil rights organizations united under the banner of the New Bern and Craven County Civic League. In June 1965, the Civic League pressured local businesses over the "grave situation" created by "the absence of equal opportunity employment in New Bern and Craven County."³⁹¹

These experiences indicated that the Good Neighbor Councils and local bi-racial committees ultimately failed to secure a modicum of change to the established economic and political order due both to the inherent constraints of moderate politics and the structural barriers erected by Jim Crow. Sanford's leadership as governor relied too much on a belief

³⁸⁸ Jim Leeson, "The First Ten Years," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 45, No. 8, With All Deliberate Speed (May, 1964): 365.

³⁸⁹ North Carolina State Office of CORE, "To Members and Friends and Students and Youth of North Carolina," Folder 7144a: "Chapters: Durham, N.C., 1954-1979," Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³⁹⁰ Morgan Smith to Floyd McKissick, Summer 1965, Folder 7166: "Chapters: Wilmington, N.C.," Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

³⁹¹ Letter from New Bern and Craven County Civic League to Floyd B. McKissick, June 15, 1965, Folder 7159: "Chapters: New Bern, N.C., 1963-1965," Floyd B. McKissick Papers.

that the state's "people of good will" could cooperate and gradually guide all toward greater equality before the law. As a result, Sanford viewed North Carolina's progressive reputation as contingent on the guidance of deliberative democracy over the perceived radicalism of grassroots participatory democracy. These "people of good will" valued comity and gradualism over immediate attempts to ameliorate social and economic inequalities for black North Carolinians who demonstrated for and demanded change. Sanford's public attempts to act as paterfamilias, overseeing the political and economic well-being of all state citizens failed on two counts. First, it did not end direct action as a primary expression of black constituent power and politics. Second, it did not assuage white supremacists, although his efforts did help break the back of the United Klans of America in the state.³⁹²

Even so, committees such as local Good Neighbor Councils exposed class and generational divisions among black leaders. As a result, where some African American ministers, lawyers, and businessmen attempted to secure reforms through negotiation with local power structures, other more radical activists continued demonstrations aimed at achieving open accommodations, school desegregation, merit employment, and political power. In the end, empty or failed promises of reform by moderate whites threatened to erode the political bargaining power that more conservative black leaders tried to exercise as an expression of their masculine dignity. The same held true for African American activists using direct action to produce change.

³⁹² Sociologist David Cunningham posits that "the intensification of police action raised the costs of UKA membership," as Governors Sanford and Moore denounced the group while increasing efforts to infiltrate, arrest, and publicly expose the organization. Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 184-188, 211-213 (quote on 212).

The conflicting views of democracy and manhood that separated black civil rights activists, white moderates, and arch-segregationists from the urban protests of 1963 through the final days of Terry Sanford's administration pushed the state's reputation for racial harmony to its limits. As arch-segregationists denounced Sanford, Preyer, and the Civil Rights Movement, they linked masculinity with a defense of Christian morality and the rights and protections provided to them by the Jim Crow system. When the federal government threatened to legislate racial equality, I. Beverly Lake and his colleagues cast themselves as principled men with backbones who served as foils to the weak, vacillating leadership of Sanford and other white moderates. With the rise of the United Klans of America, the election of a more militantly segregationist governor, and the apogee of civil rights demonstrations, it required a remarkable political effort on the part of Sanford and his allies to preserve the image of law and order in the state. This goal indicated the core of white moderates' representation of masculine dignity. By both challenging the prudence of direct action and working to discredit the politics of massive resistance, Sanford fashioned a vision of progressive political leadership without sacrificing his dignity or honor as a white Southern man. Lastly, for the African American men in the movement, masculine dignity manifested itself in numerous demonstrations, in rebuffing or not rebuffing efforts at negotiation, and by daring to agitate for and pursue a more equitable social order in the face of co-optation, threats, and violence.

CONCLUSION:

Writing for a national audience in 1964, Terry Sanford suggested, “it is time the rest of the United States realized that there are decent white persons all over the South; that most Southerners are people of goodwill, with an enormous capacity for compassion.”³⁹³ Although the rest of the nation did undergo a reassessment of the South in the years after 1965, it did not always happen in the way Sanford surmised. As sociologist Charles Payne argues, figures like “Strom Thurmond in South Carolina, even George Wallace in Alabama- were able to reinvent themselves. In the process, they were able to pull the nation in their direction, to pull the ideological center of gravity to the right, in part through their skillful exploitation of the racial anxieties and racism of the rest of the nation.”³⁹⁴ The respective gubernatorial legacies of Terry Sanford and George Wallace represent a crucial point of departure distinguishing the Jim Crow South from the prosperity and modernity of the Sunbelt South. As candidates in the 1972 Democratic presidential primary, these two former Southern governors clashed in North Carolina as part of a battle that symbolized the region’s new role in the social and political life of the United States.

During this primary, racial issues again threatened Sanford’s chances at electoral victory in both old and new ways. Wallace tapped into the resentment of many whites who opposed the acquiescence of the Nixon administration and other white politicians on the

³⁹³ Terry Sanford, “The Case for the New South,” *Look*, December 15, 1964, 81.

³⁹⁴ Charles Payne, “The Whole United States is Southern! *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Mystification of Race,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (June 2004): 88-89; See also Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*; Dan T. Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution, 1963-1994* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America* (New York: Harper’s Magazine Press, 1974).

issue of court-ordered busing. Positioning himself, in the words of historian Dan Carter, as “the most forceful spokesman for a national backlash,” Wallace argued that this decision threatened the “security and the safety of the children of our region and every other region.”³⁹⁵ By claiming that an insufficient defense of white children by passive men like Sanford who, in Wallace’s words, would “bore your ass off,” the former Alabama governor undermined the moderate’s position without the shrill rhetoric of white supremacy.³⁹⁶

In an embarrassing turn of events, Wallace defeated Sanford in the North Carolina primary by over 100,000 votes.³⁹⁷ Apparently Sanford overestimated North Carolina and the white South’s capacity for change, especially when it came to issues of federal sovereignty. Moreover, Sanford’s contest with Wallace revealed the limits of white moderates’ politics and masculine appeal. Afterward, Sanford expressed dismay that two African American leaders who he considered allies, John Wheeler and Reginald Hawkins, among others, focused on winning votes for black Congresswomen Shirley Chisholm who “came out attacking [him,] and not Wallace.”³⁹⁸

As governor, Sanford understood the potency of segregationist arguments against legal and social equality in the state and instead opted for a middle course. Yet, problems old and new hindered the viability of moderate politics and the performance of masculinity associated with it. The political struggle over civil rights in North Carolina pitted competing

³⁹⁵ Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 418; George Wallace, qtd. in Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics, 1965- 1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 209.

³⁹⁶ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 400-407.

³⁹⁷ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 405.

³⁹⁸ Covington Jr. and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 406.

visions of democracy and manhood against one another. On one hand, African American civil rights activists practiced democratic citizenship by putting their bodies on the line to assert their dignity as men and women who had been denied justice for too long. In response, white moderates like Sanford recognized the legitimacy of their grievances, but also denounced their means of direct action as unnecessary and undemocratic. Sanford and his allies recast white Southern masculinity as consistent with a moderate statecraft that promoted racial harmony, quality public education, and robust economic development. Moreover, these white moderates undercut black leaders' demands for immediate action by emphasizing that the white South required time and education to overcome the latent racism that pervaded Southern society. By promoting improved public schools and industrialization as evidence of the New South's ultimate break from its agrarian Jim Crow past, a new generation of white Southern leaders claimed the mantle of racial progress and equal opportunity even as they co-opted the demands of black activists for redress of structural and economic injustices.

The reasonable, unemotional performance of white manhood advanced by Sanford required responsibility and restraint from people of all races. Instead of the dignified protests of the Civil Rights Movement or the rabid, fear-mongering of arch-segregationists, Sanford argued that cooler heads would prevail if the right white men were entrusted with political leadership in the state. Such sensibilities emerged from his participation in and observation of electoral contests between moderates and reactionaries, which taught Sanford to view African American direct action efforts as untimely and harmful to economic and social

progress. Moreover, the Freedom Highways campaign along with the urban protests of 1963 and 1964 reinforced this belief. By prizing law and order coupled with industrial expansion above the demands of arch-segregationists and civil rights activists like, Sanford positioned himself as a realistic, yet fair-minded *paterfamilias* who looked out for the interests of all groups, even when they did not recognize his role as such. Sanford might have rejected the vitriol of white supremacists but he could not entirely discard their paternalism.

Wallace and Sanford's face off in the 1972 primary occurred at a crucial time in the history of the South and the nation. The 1970 election of a group of white moderates, known as the "New South Governors," and like-minded Congressmen, renewed questions about a greater role for white Southerners in the Democratic Party's national operation.³⁹⁹ David Gambrell, the chair of Georgia Democratic Party at the time, advised that the party's next presidential nominee draw from the white South's cadre of "moderates, as men who believe in basic law and order and who follow the traditional Democratic line on economic issues—men who can allow the working people to identify with them."⁴⁰⁰ Gambrell envisioned a different kind of populism than George Wallace. His view proved more akin to Sanford's: combining messages of Christian goodwill with a masculine insistence on law and order and a favorable climate for economic development provided a model for greater political reconciliation.

³⁹⁹ On three prominent members of this new group—South Carolina's John West, Florida's Reubin Askew, and Alabama's Albert Brewer, see Gordon Harvey, *A Question of Justice: New South Governors and Education, 1968-1976* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002).

⁴⁰⁰ Stephan Leshner, "Southern Democrats are Feeling Good Again," *Newsweek* special to *Boca Raton News*, December 2, 1970.

For this new generation of white Southerners, Sanford's re-shaping of white manhood and moderate politics proved uniquely suited to profound changes in the political economies of the state, region, and nation. The 1964 Civil Rights and 1965 Voting Rights Acts, which further re-apportioned Southern legislative districts, also boosted the cause of white suburban moderates.⁴⁰¹ For many white Southerners, the record of successful industrial recruitment and economic growth amassed by Sanford testified to the effectiveness of his approach to racial issues. Toward the end of his gubernatorial term, these gains became especially evident. For example, in 1964 the *Wall Street Journal* reported that because "North Carolina's whole race relations problem has been less severe than of most Dixie states... Investment in new plants there in 1963 totaled \$238 million up from \$98 million in 1962."⁴⁰² Moreover, where Sanford's close ties with the Kennedy Administration, namely Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges, proved a liability with arch-segregationists, some scholars credit the opening of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) office in the Research Triangle Park to these political ties.⁴⁰³ In the end, the state's reputation for racial tolerance and burgeoning industrialization helped set the stage for the rise of white moderate political leaders throughout the new "Sunbelt South."

⁴⁰¹ In tracing lines of continuity between white moderate politicians with nearly identical sensibilities and rhetoric many scholars de-emphasize the broader, structural changes that the 1965 Voting Rights Act and legislative reapportionment brought to the American South after 1965. As historian Matthew Lassiter claims in his work on white suburbanites in the South, the Supreme Court's 1962 decision in *Baker v. Carr* "turned out to be as significant as *Brown* in reshaping the political culture of the South" by "shifting power from the rural countryside to the metropolitan areas." In turn, more pro-business and pro-public education white moderates and middle-class African Americans displaced the old political class of Black Belt arch-segregationists. Lassiter, *Silent Majority*, 15-16, 29-30, 41.

⁴⁰² Excerpt included in Allan W. Rinne, *North Carolina's Changing Economy* (Raleigh: School of Engineering, North Carolina State at the University of North Carolina at Raleigh, 1964), 2.

⁴⁰³ Covington Jr., and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 348.

Whereas former Southern Regional Council (SRC) director Harold Fleming characterized moderates as “a white man without side-arms,” Sanford’s performance of white manhood relied on powerful rhetorical weapons that drew from Protestant and liberal values.⁴⁰⁴ Because of these long-term trends, Sanford’s legacy is often portrayed as that of a trailblazer for a seemingly more liberal generation of white Southern governors such as Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton.⁴⁰⁵ Although the direct connections between Sanford and the elections of two white Southern presidents are hard to establish, his leadership and vision continued to influence policymakers. William Winter, a white moderate governor in Mississippi during the 1980s, later recalled a 1971 speech Sanford delivered to white Southern leaders. In his remarks, “Sanford referred to all of the reasons why the South was on its way to unprecedented growth and progress,” including “a people not preoccupied with maintaining the old southern status quo based on race and class.”

The creation of the Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB) in 1975 represented the institutionalization of Sanford’s ideas. This body dedicated itself to producing “wise, courageous, and visionary political leadership” that would keep the fledgling Sunbelt free of the “urban sprawl,” and “deteriorating inner cities” that plagued the industrial North.⁴⁰⁶ Seeking to avoid the racial and economic problems that characterized the North, Sanford both advanced an argument for Southern exceptionalism and suggested that racial turmoil and protests could continue to hamper the South’s drive for economic development if cautious, honorable men did not lead the region.

⁴⁰⁴ Calvin Trillin, “Remembrance of Moderates Past,” *The New Yorker*, March 21, 1977, 85.

⁴⁰⁵ Drescher, *Triumph of Good Will*.

⁴⁰⁶ William Winter, “Reimagining the South,” *Southern Cultures* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 89-90.

Sanford's role in the formation of the SGPB and as a model of judicious political leadership indicates a diffusion, rather than a transformation, of moderate sensibilities in the post-Jim Crow South. This argument stands in sharp contrast to the idea that white moderates, unshackled from the racial politics of the past, could finally adopt a novel, modern worldview. For example, in a 1977 article in the *New Yorker*, journalist Calvin Trillin identified a white moderate as "someone that had something to lose."⁴⁰⁷ Moreover, Hodding Carter III, the well-known white moderate journalist from Greenville, Mississippi, touted "liberation" as a crucial part of white southerners' experience in the years after reapportionment and the legislative victories of the Civil Rights Movement.⁴⁰⁸ Carter's comments reflect the substantial, tangible differences between white moderates' experiences in Mississippi versus North Carolina. Even if white moderates had everything to gain from the death of Jim Crow, they continued to exhibit gradualist and paternalistic concerns about the pace of social and political change in the years after 1965.

In the meantime, many black activists in North Carolina tested the new political coalition between mostly middle-class black leaders and white moderate Democrats.⁴⁰⁹ For example, in 1968, African American activists including Reginald Hawkins, Eva Clayton, and Golden Frinks formed the "North Carolina Committee for More Representative Political Participation." This organization emerged with the avowed purpose of "increasing

⁴⁰⁷ Calvin Trillin, "Remembrance of Moderates Past," 87.

⁴⁰⁸ Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 314-315

⁴⁰⁹ Many African American activists' work to procure an increased role for independent, grassroots organizations in political decision-making is also evident in examples such as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) in Alabama. See Hassan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), esp.146-181.

meaningful participation within various political subdivisions of the state, and the State itself, for and by those who have traditionally been excluded or given only token participation.”⁴¹⁰ Clearly, leading black Carolinians sought increased influence in determining the state’s future, both politically and economically. Moreover, Hawkins launched an independent bid for governor in 1968 fusing the language of “Black Power” with an even more confrontational style and garnered 130,000 votes in the Democratic primary.⁴¹¹ Hawkins’ willingness to challenge both white and more traditional black Democrats, like those who led the NAACP, points to the ways that African American grassroots politics continued to evolve and shape different strategies, demands, and manifestations of black manhood at the end of the decade.

Over the next five years, African American leaders continued to critique what they saw as the impotency and injustice of white moderates’ law and order politics, particularly in the cases of the Benson Affair and “Wilmington Ten” trials. In 1969, five black youth in Benson received lengthy prison sentences for attempting to burn a Ku Klux Klan meeting hall located near their neighborhood. Though the would-be arsonists only managed to damage its entryway, the white judge at the trial feared manifestations of Black Power in his own backyard. International outrage pressured white moderate Democratic Governor Robert “Bob” Scott to intervene, which he did. As historian Crystal Sanders argues, although Scott’s

⁴¹⁰ Reginald M. Hawkins memo to Members of the North Carolina Committee for More Representative Political Participation, June 13, 1968, Folder 646: “North Carolina Committee for More Representative Political Participation,” NCCHR Papers.

⁴¹¹ The 1968 gubernatorial election saw the white moderate Democrat, Robert Scott, barely defeat Republican Congressman James Gardner. Michael B. Richardson, “Not Gradually... But Now: Reginald Hawkins, Black Leadership, and Desegregation in North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (July 2005): 347.

law and order-focused campaign granted him a narrow victory, the reversal of the sentences “resulted from increased civil rights activism and pressure from ordinary citizens.” A similar defense of law and order informed Governor James Hunt’s decision not to commute the sentences of black activists accused of planting a bomb in a local grocery store in the Wilmington 10 cases of 1971.⁴¹² It would be forty-one years before another governor, Beverly Purdue, pardoned the Wilmington 10 as one of her last acts in office.⁴¹³ These instances reveal how wedded to “law and order” white moderates remained even at the expense of justice. The new model of white moderate masculinity meant defending the state’s reputation and insisting on North Carolina elites’ right to handle racial issues on their own terms.

Despite the contributions Sanford and others made by promoting economic modernization and maintaining North Carolina’s positive image to national onlookers, progress toward achieving a more equitable racial order proved marginal at best. The re-packaging of white Southern manhood beginning with Terry Sanford neither defeated nor quieted white reactionary elements in the political contests of the following decades. As Sanford’s 1972 defeat by George Wallace indicates, many white voters chose a more intractable and obfuscating, yet equally reactionary, racial conservatism in the wake of changes wrought by the civil rights movement. In fact, white moderates’ gains and losses in the South and nation point to a dynamic milieu wherein grassroots insurgencies by African

⁴¹² Crystal R. Sanders, “North Carolina Justice On Display: Governor Bob Scott and the 1968 Benson Affair,” *Journal of Southern History* 79, no. 3 (August 2013): 661.

⁴¹³ Crystal R. Sanders, “North Carolina Justice on Display,” 678-679; Anne Blythe, “Purdue Pardons Wilmington Ten,” *News and Observer*, January 1, 2013.

Americans continued to push the envelope for social change and white conservatives worked with equal fervor to roll back the gains already made

As scholarship on the changes in Southern politics demonstrates, reckoning with the burdens of the region's history is an often messy and awkward affair for white people who lived through the dismantling of Jim Crow.⁴¹⁴ Yet, where do Terry Sanford and other white moderates stand in a paradigm of regional redemption and modernization? Certainly these men and women can appear, and in many cases should be recognized, for taking stances that envisioned a different social order than the one in which they lived. However, citizens and historians should resist elevating these moderate by placing them on the "right side of history."⁴¹⁵ As a black lawyer in Louisiana coyly remarked in the late 1960s, "I keep hearing about white people who say they've been working behind the scenes... Yes sir, it must be getting mighty crowded back there behind the scenes."⁴¹⁶

Moderate constructions of memory in this tumultuous era serve to downplay the bitter, contingent political contests that occurred across the color line beyond the Deep South. These events did not always make the headlines in national newspapers or become leading stories in newscasts, but the lack of media attention did not change the fact that African Americans refused to play their assigned parts, wear "the mask" of compliance and gratitude, or be kept in "their place" in this historical drama. Thus, the experiences of movement

⁴¹⁴ Fred Hobson, *But Now I See: The White Southern Racial Conversion Narrative* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

⁴¹⁵ This idea mirrors what historian Anthony Badger calls the "self-congratulatory" model that guides many historical interpretations of the Civil Rights Movement in South Carolina. See: Anthony Badger, "From Defiance to Moderation: South Carolina Governors and Racial Chance," in *New Deal/ New South*, 127-143.

⁴¹⁶ Calvin Trillin, "Remembrance of Moderates Past," 85.

activists in North Carolina illustrate that historical accounts and collective memory should not draw neat lines that exonerate white moderates while castigating more belligerent segregationists. In contrast to white moderates' demands that activists negotiate behind the scenes, the movement pressed white Southerners of all stripes to confront their respective understandings of democracy, Christianity, manhood, and womanhood in a public manner.

Indeed, narratives highlighting white moderates' enlightened positions assume the inevitability of progressive social change and stand to diminish the risks assumed by African American men and women who struggled, endured, and produced the political tension necessary to achieving a more just society in North Carolina, the South, and the United States. Their stories underscore how competing ideas about manhood, democracy, religion, justice, and law and order continue to pervade contemporary discourses about race relations in the United States. In spite of any lingering frustration and cynicism, the struggles described here testify to the idea that the painstaking work to build a society that values compassion and the dignity of every human being remains unfinished, yet never impossible.

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